



Bureau of Land Management

CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT

1990

Part 4

Volume 3

*Contains WSA's: CA-060-025A through CA-060-029 and
CDCA-100 through CDCA-136*

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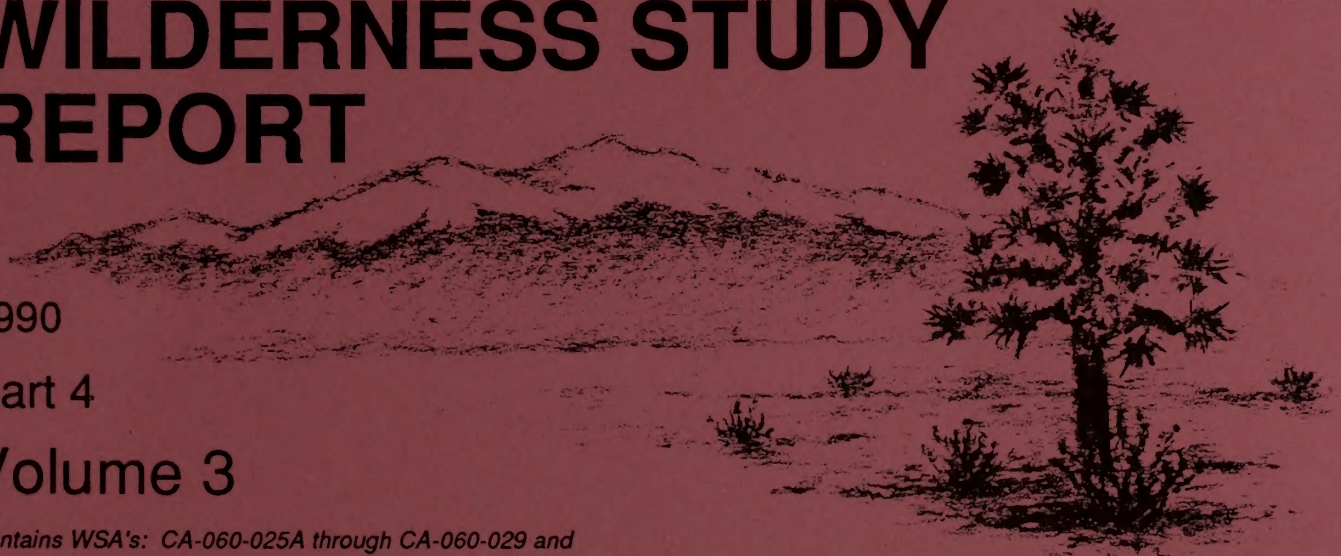
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BLM MISSION STATEMENT

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Supplemental information to these reports includes Environmental Documents, Mineral Survey Reports, and maps. To review these supplemental data, or to obtain additional information, please contact:

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Carrizo Gorge

CA-060-025A

CARRIZO GORGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CA-060-025A)

1. THE STUDY AREA —

15,408 acres

The Carrizo Gorge WSA is located in southeastern San Diego County, California, about 60 miles east of San Diego and 52 miles west of El Centro. This 15,408 acre study area consists entirely of public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The WSA boundaries are formed on the north and east by designated wilderness within Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, and on the south by private lands bordering on Interstate Highway 8. The west boundary is irregular and has been drawn to avoid scattered parcels of private property and public lands lacking wilderness characteristics. The west boundary follows a combination of property lines and fence lines at the north and south ends, but through much of its length runs cross-country, not aligned with physical or legal features.

Several other designations overlies portions of the WSA. The 720-acre Bow Willow Palms Research Natural Area is contained within the WSA, established in 1963 to recognize the ecological significance of a California fan palm oasis. The entire WSA except the southernmost two miles is part of the 21,500 acre In-Ko-Pah Mountains Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), established in 1981 to protect important peninsular bighorn sheep habitat and archeological resources.

Elevations within the WSA vary from 1,000 feet in Carrizo Gorge to 4,647 feet at Mount Tule. The northwestern portion of the area consists of the boulder strewn, chaparral covered rolling upland of the In-Ko-Pah Mountains. While the In-Ko-Pahs rise gradually from McCain Valley to the west, the east slope drops dramatically into the depths of Carrizo Canyon. The southern and eastern portions of the study area are composed of steep canyons and mountainsides which form the western side of Carrizo Gorge (the gorge bottom and east wall are located in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Wilderness).

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The WSA is within BLM's Eastern San Diego County Planning Unit, for which a management framework plan was completed in 1981. Various suitability recommendations were analyzed in the draft and final Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) on the Wilderness Recommendations for the Eastern San Diego

County Planning Unit, completed in 1986. Four different suitability recommendations were analyzed in the draft EIS: all wilderness, no wilderness, and two partial wilderness options in which approximately two acres and eight acres, respectively, were recommended for nonwilderness, to accommodate scenic overlooks and accompanying access roads. The partial wilderness recommendations were both dropped from consideration in the final EIS, because more accurate mapping determined that one overlook is actually outside the WSA boundaries, and that the other is located only 100 yards inside the WSA. BIM decided that it would be more manageable to have visitors walk the short distance to the second overlook, rather than to construct an access road.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE — 15408 acres recommended for wilderness
0 acres recommended for nonwilderness

All wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. All wilderness is the environmentally preferable alternative. This is because it will result in the least change from the existing natural environment over the long term. The all wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the WSA has outstanding wilderness and ecological values; and (2) wilderness designation would have minimal conflicts with other resource uses.

Wilderness designation will preserve the outstanding natural wilderness characteristics and scenic vistas, and protect optimal habitat for the peninsular bighorn sheep, listed as threatened by the State of California and a candidate for Federal listing as threatened or endangered. The Carrizo Gorge WSA is an ecological transition zone between the Colorado Desert and the peninsular mountain ranges which is not represented in any existing units of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Designation will also provide wilderness recreation opportunities within an hour's drive of the San Diego metropolitan area. The suitability recommendation will preclude any further vehicular use of approximately three miles of primitive routes of travel.

Wilderness designation will have minimal adverse effects on other resource uses. Energy and mineral resource development would not be significantly affected, as the area has no history of mining, no mining claims, no mineral or energy leases, and generally low potential for mineral or energy resources, except gem minerals. There is moderate potential for manganese in the south central part of the WSA. Most grazing which occurs in the WSA is grandfathered, pre-FLPMA, and could therefore continue under wilderness designation. The entire WSA was closed to motorized vehicle use in 1979. Motorized recreation opportunities which existed in Bow Willow and Rockhouse Canyons prior to 1979 will be permanently eliminated and considered an acceptable compromise to protect wilderness characteristics, the bighorn sheep population, and the significant archeological resources in the two canyons.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	15408
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
Total		<u>15,408</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	15,408
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	<u>0</u>
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		15,408
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	0
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area appears natural and generally unaffected by man; most of the WSA is in pristine condition. The few human imprints within the study area are located primarily along its western edge, and are substantially unnoticeable within the area as a whole. These human alterations consist of a few miles of primitive ways, fences, and grazing improvements, including four developed springs, one reservoir, two troughs, and approximately one mile of water pipeline. A wildlife guzzler is also within the WSA. Rockhouse Canyon contains the remains of an abandoned "line" shack which inspired the canyon's name.

2. Solitude: The WSA offers many opportunities for solitude because of the high topographic relief, winding canyons, and low level of visitation. The presence of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Wilderness to the east enhances and extends these opportunities for solitude.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The WSA offers many opportunities for primitive and unconfined forms of recreation. Movement within the study area is confined only by the steepness of the terrain and the ability of the recreationist. Currently the major activities are hiking, backpacking, rockhounding, nature study, sightseeing, and photography. The WSA receives an estimated 3,000 visitor use days of nonmotorized recreation annually. The adjacent State park wilderness enhances primitive recreation opportunities. Together, the Federal and State units provide approximately 50,000 acres for wilderness recreation.
4. Special Features: The WSA, along with the remainder of the In-Ko-Pah Mountains ACEC and adjacent portions of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, supports one of two isolated populations of peninsular bighorn sheep (Ovis canadensis cremnobates) which occur wholly within the United States. A third isolated population is international, ranging in the Jacumba Mountains south into Baja California. The subspecies is listed as threatened by the State of California and is a candidate for listing as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS). Critical summer water sources for the In-Ko-Pah mountains population are located primarily within the WSA. The population appears to be declining, for reasons not yet fully determined. Although it has been estimated at 80 to 100 animals since the early 1970's, recent surveys indicate the population may be as low as 40 to 60.

The San Diego coast horned lizard, Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei, has been observed on granitic substrates and outcrops. The lizard is a candidate for listing as threatened or endangered by the USF&WS. The WSA provides nesting habitat for golden eagles and other birds of prey. Swainson's Hawk, Buteo swainsoni, has been observed in the area. This species is a USF&WS candidate species and is listed as threatened by the State of California.

Three other animal species under status review by USF&WS may occur within the WSA, although their presence has not been confirmed. These are: the magic gecko, Coleonyx switaki, (listed by the State as threatened); the orange-throated whiptail, Cnemidophorus hyperythrus; and ferruginous hawk, Buteo regalis.

Seven plant species of special concern occur within the WSA. Four are candidates for listing by USF&WS as threatened or endangered: Jacumba milkvetch (Astragalus douglasii var. perstrictus), low-bush monkeyflower (Diplacus aridus), California barrel cactus (Ferocactus acanthodes var. acanthodes), and mountain springs lupine (Lupinus excubitus var. medius). The lupine and cactus are common within the WSA, whereas the other two plants are common just outside the WSA, and extend into the study area in small numbers. Two additional species are listed by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS): desert beauty (Linanthus bellus), and Parish's larkspur (Delphinium parishii spp. subglobosum). CNPS considers the desert beauty rare or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere, while the larkspur is listed as a plant of limited distribution.

The WSA also contains California fan palm (Washingtonia filifera) oases, most commonly found along the edge of dry washes or in narrow canyons. The fan palm is a relict species, dependent upon permanent water sources. The Bow Willow Palms Research Natural Area was designated to protect and to recognize the outstanding scenic and natural values of the fan palm oases.

The Carrizo Gorge WSA offers some of the most expansive scenic vistas in the California Desert; views across distances of 100 miles or more are common. The panorama includes the Salton Sea, Chocolate Mountains, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, Carrizo Badlands, Coyote Mountains, and Mount Signal on the Mexican border. Scenic viewing is one of the major visitor attractions. The presence of perennial streams and streamside trees including the fan palms in Bow Willow and other side canyons adds scenic interest. Granitic rock formations and occasional views of bighorn sheep perched on the crags round out the area's visual appeal.

Archeological resources within the WSA are concentrated in Bow Willow and Rockhouse Canyons, with site density estimated at 22 sites per square mile. Most of these are isolated agave roasting pits, although several spectacular temporary camps containing ceramics and stone tools are also present, and are undoubtedly eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Additional undiscovered archeological resources very likely exist,

because of the presence of both surface water and plants of nutritional importance to prehistoric populations. Aboriginal rock art sites are reported in Bow Willow Canyon, although the existence of these pictographs has not been verified recently.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 15,408 acres of the California Chaparral/Chaparral ecosystem. Wilderness designation of the Carrizo Gorge WSA would not add any individual new ecosystem to the National Wilderness Preservation System. However, the WSA is an ecological transition zone between the Colorado Desert and the peninsular mountain ranges which is not represented in any existing units of the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
California/Chaparral Chaparral	17	462,256	10	71,802
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
California/Chaparral Chaparral	17	462,256	10	71,802

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of five major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of wilderness areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of these population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:
The closest designated area is Anza-Borrego Desert State Wilderness, bordering the Carrizo Gorge WSA on the east. Three other designated wilderness areas are within 50 air miles: Hauser and Pine Creek, administered by the Cleveland National Forest, and Cuyamaca Mountains State Wilderness. In addition, six BLM study areas recommended for wilderness are within 50 air miles of Carrizo Gorge WSA.

C. Manageability

The Carrizo Gorge WSA is manageable as wilderness. Factors which enhance manageability include the area's remoteness, limited access, rugged desert topography, and the compatible management of adjacent State wilderness. The entire WSA has been closed to off-highway vehicles since 1979.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Carrizo Gorge WSA is in the Vallecito Mountain Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The GRA file data showed no evidence to support any mineral potential within the WSA.

In 1983 and 1984 mineral surveys were conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM). In 1987 a joint report was published by the two agencies as USGS Bulletin 1711-B. The only area classified for mineral potential was the Mount Tule area in the southern portion of the WSA, identified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of gem minerals (see Map 2).

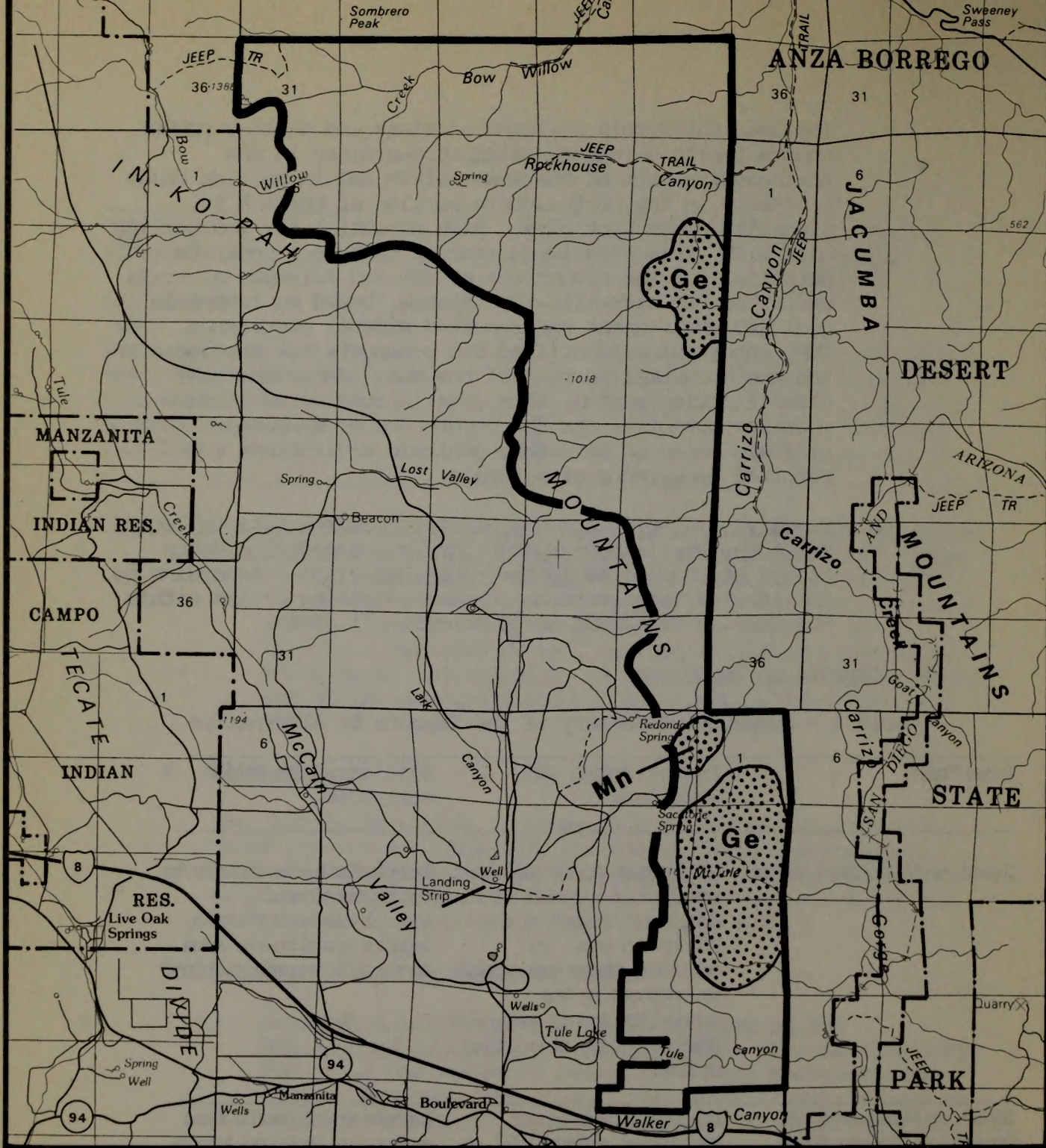
The 1963 California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) County Report 3 reports feldspar was mined in the northeastern part of the WSA in 1939 and identifies three prospects in the northeastern portion of the WSA in pegmatite dikes that have a high potential for gem quality minerals. This area is considered to have a moderate potential for the occurrence of gem and feldspar minerals under the BLM classification system, based on favorable geologic environment and reported mineral occurrence. The CDMG report also identified two prospects for manganese in the south-central portion of the WSA. Under the BLM classification system, this area is considered to have a moderate potential for the occurrence of manganese minerals based on favorable geologic environment and reported occurrence of minerals.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Decision: According to BLM records there were no unpatented mining claims within the Carrizo Gorge WSA as of December 31, 1987.

E. Impacts on Resources

Table 4 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative

Issue Topic	Proposed Action (All Wilderness)	No Wilderness/No Action Alternative
Impact on Wilderness Values	Wilderness values will be retained as a result of the continued closure of the WSA to OHV use. In addition, these values will be enhanced by the rehabilitation of seven and one-half miles of existing routes.	Except for minor impacts to the perception of naturalness on 300 acres, impacts would be the same as for the Proposed Action.
Impact on Management of Peninsular Bighorn Sheep	No significant impact. Management efforts will be enhanced with the continued closure of the area to recreational OHV use, mechanized fire suppression, and mineral development.	Impacts would be the same as for the Proposed Action.



T15S
T16S

T16S
T17S

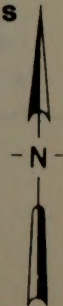
	Recommended for Wilderness
	Recommended for Non Wilderness
	Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
	Split Estate
	State
	Private

Explanation

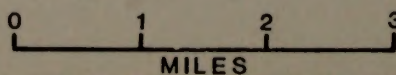
	High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
	Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
M	Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
H	High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

Ge Gems
Mn Manganese



Carrizo Gorge
Mineral Resource Potential



MAP-2
060-025A

Table 4 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative (Cont'd)

Issue Topic	Proposed Action (All Wilderness)	No Wilderness/No Action Alternative
Impact on the McCain Valley Grazing Allotment	Nearly 2,240 acres grazed on a temporary nonrenewable basis will be eliminated, and will have a moderate negative impact on livestock grazing on the McCain Valley Grazing Allotment. However, designation will have no impact on livestock operations on 2,910 acres.	No impacts; 2,240 acres currently grazed on a temporary nonrenewable basis would be grazed on a regular basis.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the EIS for the Wilderness Recommendations, Eastern San Diego County Planning Unit. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the Eastern San Diego County MFP. The following is a summary of all comments received.

1. Inventory Phase: Public comments covered a variety of items. Many agreed with findings and wanted further consideration of this area as wilderness. Other respondents noted that the unit is criss-crossed with roads and also contains water troughs, apiaries, and fences - all of which disqualify certain areas for wilderness. Many expressed the belief that protection of the Peninsular Bighorn Sheep is an important reason for considering this unit for wilderness.
2. Study Phase: A few comments received during the inventory phase concerned study phase considerations. One stated that wilderness classification would protect the habitat of bighorn sheep. Another said that under wilderness, multiple use would be eliminated in Rock House Canyon.
3. Proposed Livestock Grazing and Wilderness Management for the Eastern San Diego County Planning Unit - Draft EIS: The proposed action recommended that all of this unit's 15,408 acres be designated suitable for wilderness, except for approximately two acres to be used for developing

unique overlooks of the area.

During the review of the Draft EIS, 23 letters were received from Federal, State and local agencies, organizations and individuals. Only seven of these responses addressed the WSA. Four favored a wilderness designation; two opposed wilderness, and an oil company stated that the region geothermal has potential.

Wilderness proponents supported the BLM's recommendation. Opponents to wilderness gave two reasons: first, wilderness status would interfere with sound management of the Peninsular Bighorn Sheep; second, access was need for rockhounds. An oil company urged that geothermal potential be carefully evaluated throughout the WSA and that areas found to have potential be exempted from wilderness designation.

4. Management Framework Plan (MFP) for Eastern San Diego County Planning Unit - Wilderness Recommendations: The recommendation of the MFP for the Carrizo Gorge WSA was the same as that described above for the Draft EIS on wilderness management.

Approximately 54 out of 60 comments gave an opinion on the Carrizo Gorge WSA. Eleven were non-specific, in that they requested wilderness status for all of the WSAs within the planning unit. Included in this group was the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. The remaining 43 comments approved the recommendation on this unit. No substantiating reasons were given.

Three respondents whose particular interest was four-wheel drive recreation, opposed all wilderness in this region. One individual wanted this land to be used for homesteading rather than wilderness.

5. 1986 Amendments to the Eastern San Diego County Management Framework Plan: A proposal was made El Centro Resource Area of the BLM to change the recommendation on two acres of the WSA from unsuitable to suitable. These small areas were designed to provide vehicle access to scenic overlooks within the WSA. Field evaluation showed that the overlooks were incorrectly mapped; one was outside the WSA and the other was just 100 yards inside the boundary. Therefore, ORV access was not needed. In addition, prohibiting vehicle access would be protective of the rare peninsular bighorn sheep. Twenty seven letters were received in response to the 1986 amendments. All but one favored the amendments, agreeing with the rationale of the staff. One respondent opposed the change in suitability, stating that disabled people would not be able to walk to the overlook.

Table Mountain

CA-060-026

TABLE MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CA-060-026)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

1,018 acres

The Table Mountain WSA is located three miles north of Interstate 8 in southeastern San Diego County, about 60 miles east of San Diego and 45 miles west of El Centro. This 1,018 acre WSA consists entirely of public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (see Table 1 and Map 1).

The WSA borders Anza-Borrego Desert State Park on the north and east. On the south it borders other public lands; on the west it borders a State section outside the park. The southern boundary is not aligned with any physical or legal feature, but was drawn to exclude those public lands lacking wilderness characteristics.

The WSA consists of the southern tip of a generally north-south trending ridge of the Jacumba Mountains. The southern end of the WSA contains both slopes of the ridge and the rolling land to either side. Moving north, and because the WSA boundary follows the section line which bisects the ridge, only the east-facing slope is included in the northern third of the study area. Table Mountain, the feature after which the WSA is named, is actually over one mile south of the WSA. Located in the transition zone between semi-succulent desert scrub and chaparral, elevations in the WSA range from 2,880 to 4,224 feet. The extremely rocky terrain exhibits the large, rounded granite boulders characteristic of the region. About three miles of primitive dirt road provide motorized access to the WSA boundary from Old Highway 80 to the south. The road is marginally negotiable by two-wheel drive vehicle most of the time.

The WSA was studied under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The rationale for making Table Mountain a WSA was that Anza-Borrego Desert State Park was evaluating the wilderness potential of the land, which borders the WSA on two sides. That portion of the state park has since been designated wilderness. The WSA is within BLM's Eastern San Diego County Planning Unit, for which a management framework plan (MFP) was completed in 1981. Two suitability recommendations were analyzed in the 1980 draft EIS on Livestock Grazing and Wilderness Management of the Eastern San Diego County Planning Unit, and the final EIS on the Wilderness Recommendations for the Eastern San Diego County Planning Unit Section 202 WSAs, completed in 1988: all wilderness and no wilderness.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0 acres recommended for
wilderness
1,018 acres recommended for
nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Table Mountain WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

All wilderness is the environmentally preferable alternative. This is because it will result in the least change from the existing natural environment over the long term. It is not the recommendation for this WSA, however, for the reasons described below.

The study area will continue to be managed in accordance with the Eastern San Diego County Planning Unit MFP. Since this is a broad-based, general plan, not all future management actions can be predicted with certainty. Projections have been made to allow analysis of the effects of the recommendation. Although the BLM is not necessarily committed to all of these actions, the following is an outline of reasonably feasible activities which could occur. Fire suppression activities will continue, and will be guided by a fire management plan. It is expected that no prescribed burns will be conducted, no firebreaks will be constructed, and fire suppression lines will be constructed by mechanized equipment very rarely, at a rate not exceeding one-quarter mile of line every 20 years. A livestock drift fence and spring development will be constructed to curtail the past problem of livestock trespass onto the adjacent state park. After these improvements are installed, cattle will again be allowed to graze the Table Mountain Pasture. It is expected that one small underground mine will developed near the western WSA boundary, in section 22, T. 17 S., R. 8 E. Total surface disturbance will be 1.5 acres, including approximately 100 yards of new access road. No primitive routes of travel have been identified within the WSA.

The no wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the wilderness values of the area are not considered outstanding, and (2) current management has proven effective in maintaining the area's existing resources. Wilderness values in the adjacent Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Wilderness will not be adversely impacted by this recommendation.

Opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation are limited by the area's size and the proximity of roads. The south boundary adjoins public land containing a small mine, a quarry, and numerous prospects served by a system of primitive roads, which are frequently used by off-highway vehicle recreationists. Sights and sounds from the adjacent land decrease the feeling of remoteness.

The WSA is currently managed for low-intensity use. Motor vehicles are excluded from the WSA. The principal users of the area are recreationists, primarily hunters and rockhounds. After release from wilderness consideration, BLM guidelines for low-intensity use will assure that the WSA remains essentially natural in character. Only minor changes to the area's existing wilderness values are expected.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	1,018
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
Total		<u>1,018</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	<u>0</u>
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	1,018
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>1,018</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The Table Mountain WSA appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. The only evident alterations to the natural environment are a few small, unobtrusive abandoned mining prospects.
2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude are limited by the area's small size and the proximity of roads. The south boundary adjoins public land containing a small mine, a quarry, and numerous prospects served by a system of primitive roads, which are

frequently used by off-highway vehicle recreationists. However, because of the WSA's low visitation, solitude can still be found, particularly in the northern third of the unit, which adjoins Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Wilderness. This northern portion is farthest from the roads and hence, other users, and it is visually screened by a ridge.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Like solitude, opportunities for primitive recreation are limited by the area's small size. When viewed in conjunction with the state park wilderness, the area does provide opportunities for cross-country hiking, backpacking, and general nature study. Opportunities for upland game and mule deer hunting are limited because hunting is prohibited in the state park, which partially surrounds the WSA and makes for a very confined hunting area.
4. Special Features: The WSA contains four plant species which are under status review by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS) for possible listing as threatened or endangered: Jacumba milkvetch (Astragalus douglasii var. perstrictus), low bush monkeyflower (Diplacus aridus), Mountain Springs bush lupine (Lupinus excubitus var. medius), and Pholisma arenarium. Nine additional species are listed by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). Geraea viscida, Ipomopsis tenuifolia, Linanthus bellus, Mahonia higginsae, Mentzelia hirsutissima var. stenophylla, Mirabilis tenuiloba, and Penstemon clevelandii spp. connatus are classified as rare in California but more common elsewhere. Delphinium parishii spp. subglobosum and Lathyrus splendens are listed as rare both in California and elsewhere.

Three wildlife species under status review by USF&WS may occur within the WSA, all though their presence has not been confirmed: San Diego coast horned lizard, magic gecko, and peninsular bighorn sheep. Sheep have been observed southwest of the WSA and may occur on the periphery of the WSA on a transient basis. The loggerhead shrike, considered sensitive by USF&WS in Region 1, inhabits the WSA year-long.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 1,018 acres of the California Chaparral/Chaparral ecosystem. Wilderness designation of the Table Mountain WSA would not increase the ecological diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
California Chaparral/Chaparral	17	462,256	10	86,192
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
California Chaparral/Chaparral	17	462,256	10	86,192

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of five major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of wilderness areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of these population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The Table Mountain WSA is within 50 air miles of six BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness is contiguous with the WSA in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Less than 50 air miles away are three other wilderness areas Pine Creek and Hauser, administered by the U.S. Forest Service and Cuyamaca Mountains State Wilderness Area.

C. Manageability

The Table Mountain WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, the area's wilderness values will remain marginal. Opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation are limited by the area's small size and the proximity of roads.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

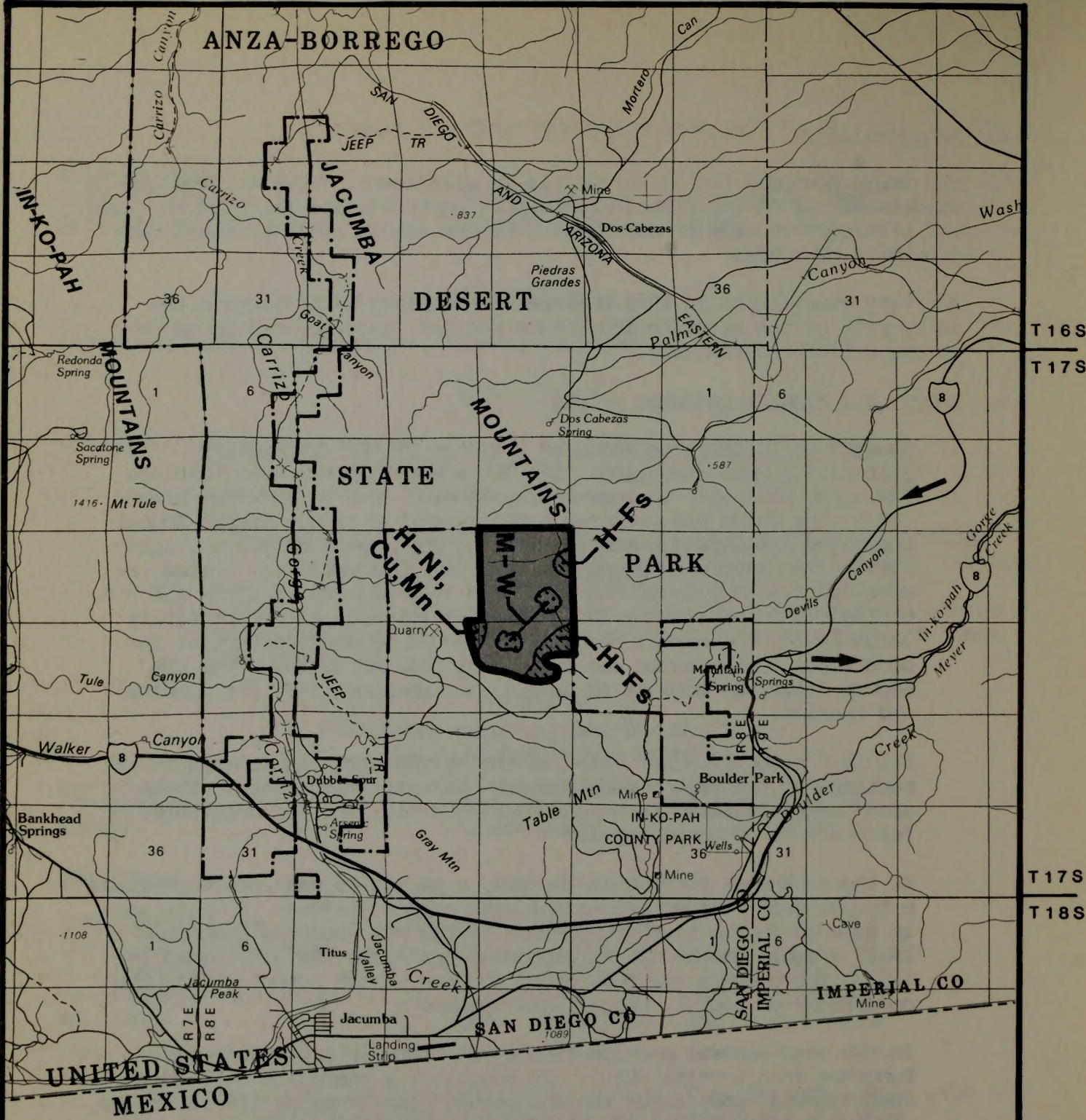
D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Table Mountain WSA is within the Vallecito Mountains Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA), for which BLM prepared a GRA Report in 1980. The GRA Report indicated a moderate potential for the occurrence of copper, lead, silver, and zinc near prospects outside and immediately inside the west-central portion of the WSA. The 1980 GRA Report cites the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) designation of the area as prospectively valuable for geothermal resources in 1979; however, potential for occurrence is low under the BLM classification system. The GRA Report lists the area as favorable, but unclassified, for uranium and thorium.

Feldspar production was cited in the northeastern and southeastern portions of the WSA. Under the BLM classification system, these areas are considered to have a high potential for the occurrence of feldspar, as shown on Map 2.

In the southwest portion of the WSA, a pegmatite was intercepted in a tunnel that assayed 14% nickel with copper sulfate. A shear zone in an area in the southern portion of the WSA produced manganese in 1928; a small amount of 17% manganese grade ore was also mined in 1953. These areas are considered to have a high potential for the occurrence of nickel, copper, and manganese.

In the east-central portion of the WSA there is a prospect for tungsten in a tactite skarn. In addition, a pegmatite sill in the south-central portion of the WSA showed some tungsten in tactite but was not developed. Based on a favorable geologic environment, and anomalous concentrations, or known deposits of tungsten, the area is considered to have a moderate potential for the occurrence of tungsten resources under the BLM classification system.



T 16 S
T 17 S

T 17 S
T 18 S

R7E R8E

R8E R9E

<p>NONE Recommended for Wilderness</p> <p> Recommended for Non Wilderness</p> <p> Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness</p> <p> Split Estate</p> <p> State</p> <p> Private</p>		<p>Explanation</p> <p> High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals</p> <p> Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals</p> <p>M Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area</p> <p>H High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area</p>		<p>Commodity Symbols</p> <p>Cu Copper</p> <p>Fs Feldspar</p> <p>Mn Manganese</p> <p>Ni Nickel</p> <p>W Tungsten</p>	
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Table Mountain Mineral Resource Potential

0 1 2 3
MILES

MAP-2
060-026

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Decision: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys were conducted in this WSA since it is recommended nonsuitable. The 1963 California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) County Report 3 cites mines and mineral activity that have occurred from the late 1800s to 1962.

Although numerous mining claims are located immediately west of the WSA, BLM records as of December 31, 1987, show no unpatented mining claims within the WSA.

E. Impacts on Resources

Table 4 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative

Issue Topic	Proposed Action (No Wilderness/No Action)	All Wilderness Alternative
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Negative impacts to wilderness values will occur as a result of mining, fence construction, fire suppression, and cattle grazing, but all of these impacts will be minor. Fire suppression activities will have only a short-term impact.	The net effect of this alternative would be the retention and long-term protection of the area's wilderness values. However, cattle grazing and range management activities would occur as under the Proposed Action, with identical impacts.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Proposed Livestock Grazing and Wilderness Management for the Eastern San Diego County Planning Unit - Draft EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the Eastern San Diego County MFP. The following is a summary of all comments received.

1. Inventory Phase: Some comments agreed with the BLM's findings. Others mentioned roads and mines within the unit. Field checks disclosed no new roads.

2. Study Phase: Some comments received during the inventory phase concerned study phase considerations. One requested wilderness designation to protect bighorn sheep. Rockhounds wanted to maintain vehicular access to favorite collecting spots, particularly for those hobbyists who have difficulty walking long distances.
3. Proposed Livestock Grazing and Wilderness Management for the Eastern San Diego County Planning Unit - Draft EIS: During the review of the Draft EIS, 23 letters were received from Federal, State, and local agencies; organizations; and individuals. Only four of these responses addressed the Table Mountain WSA. Two favored a wilderness designation for this WSA but gave no reasons. A gem and mineral society opposed wilderness, because they want vehicle access to reach favorite collecting sites. An oil company stated that the region has potential for geothermal resources. They urged that the potential be carefully evaluated throughout the WSA and any promising areas be exempted from wilderness designation.
4. Management Framework Plan (MFP) for Eastern San Diego County Planning Unit - Wilderness Recommendations: Out of approximately 60 responses to the MFP, 24 specifically requested a wilderness designation for the Table Mountain WSA. One of these was a petition listing (but not signed by) 43 individuals. Some of these letters pointed out that although the area is small, it would be a valuable buffer or addition to the adjacent proposed wilderness in Anza-Borrego State Park. The Desert Protective Council suggested deferring the decision of Table Mountain until the decision has been made on the adjacent State Park wilderness.

Three respondents whose particular interest was four-wheel drive recreation, opposed all wilderness in this region. One individual wanted this land to be used for homesteading rather than wilderness.

No comments were received from local governments.

Hauser Mountain

CA-060-027C

HAUSER MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CA-060-027C)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 5,540 acres

The Hauser Mountain WSA is located in San Diego County, approximately 25 miles east of Chula Vista, California. The WSA is composed entirely of 5,540 public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The WSA is surrounded by private lands, and therefore, possesses a highly irregular boundary. The northern and eastern boundaries are determined entirely by private land boundaries. The southern boundary also follows the edge of private land except for a small segment that is delineated by Highway 94. The western boundary, like the southern boundary, is determined by private land, except in the northwest corner of the WSA. Roughly one mile of the WSA boundary follows a dirt road.

The unit is basically a single, broad, undulating ridge oriented north-south in an area of alternating low ridges and valleys. The area ranges in elevation from 2,400 feet in the southeast to 3,800 feet at the USGS Campo VABM horizontal control station. Numerous rocky outcrops occur throughout the unit, but nowhere in the unit is there exceptional relief.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Two different suitability recommendations were analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared for the Western Counties Wilderness Study Project: no wilderness and all wilderness.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 0 acres recommended for wilderness
5,540 acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

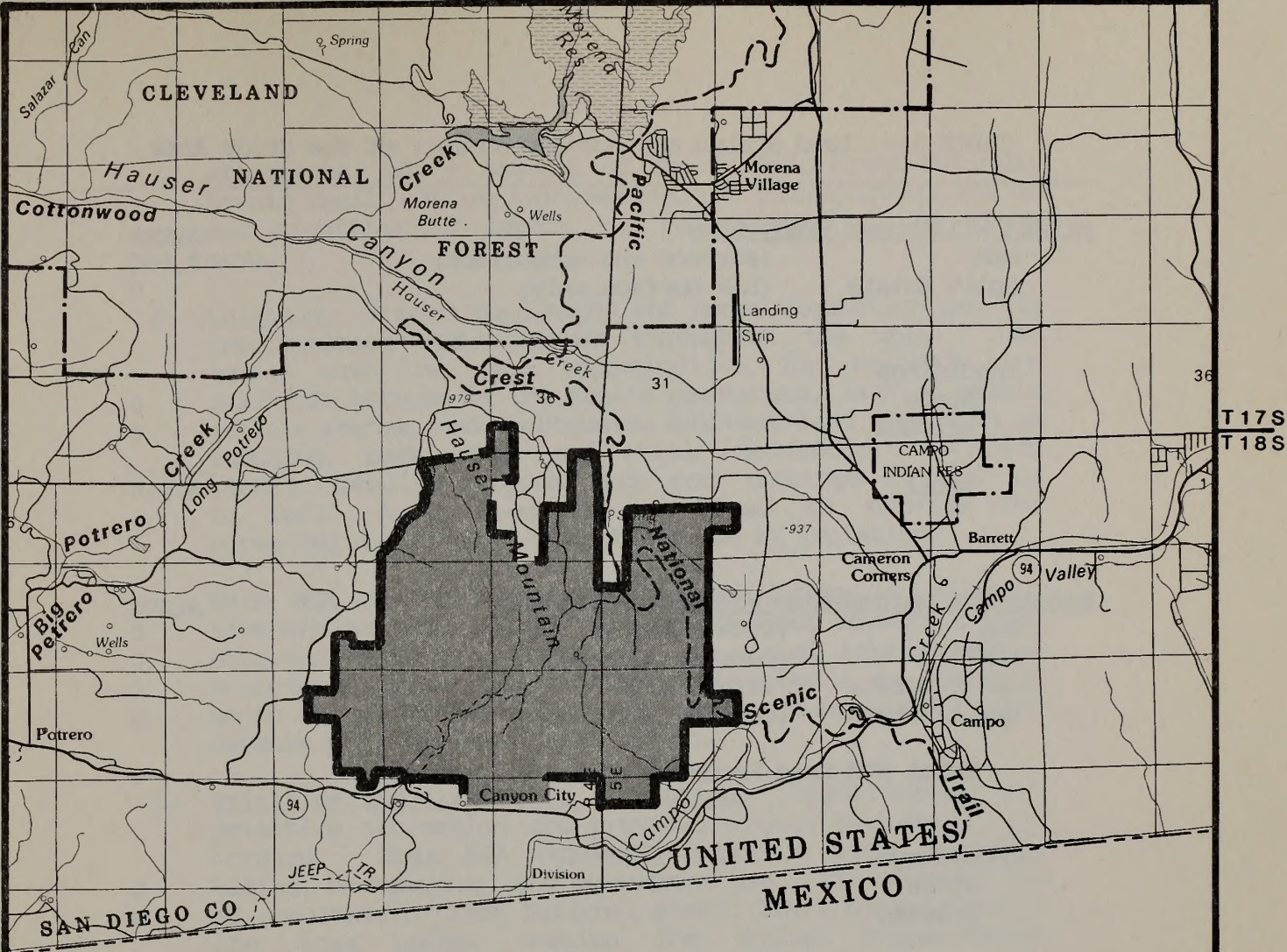
The all wilderness recommendation is environmentally preferable as it would result in the least change from the existing natural environment over the long term.

The following rationale is given in support of the nonsuitable recommendation: (1) the wilderness values for most of the area are low; (2) the current use levels have had no detrimental effect on the wilderness values the area possess; (3) need to provide for OHV routes of travel; (4) current management has proven effective in maintaining the area's existing resources and values.

The wilderness values of this WSA, while sufficient to meet the Section 2 (c) criteria of the 1964 Wilderness Act, are less than outstanding. Within this WSA, naturalness has been reduced by a variety of range improvements supporting two grazing allotments that cover this WSA. These improvements range from numerous fences, diversion dikes, and reservoirs to primitive routes of travel used to maintain the other facilities. Although opportunities for solitude and unconfined recreation are available within this WSA, they are not fully realized because of the restricted public access.

Current uses of the area have had little effect on the area's marginal wilderness values. Currently, this WSA produces roughly 166 animal unit months (AUM) of forage allocated to livestock. Both allotments are seasonal, supporting cattle for only a short time while the forage is available. The effect of the cattle on wilderness values is minimal. Current recreation use consists of backpacking, hiking, equestrian use, and hunting for upland game. Recreational use is low because of the lack of public access.

OHV use, which is often a concern on public land, is severely limited here. The absence of public access to the area and the shortage of motorized recreation opportunities available have discouraged OHV users. Use levels here are not expected to increase.



R4E R5E

NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

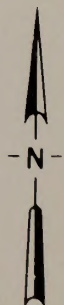
STATE

PRIVATE

PRIVATE

Hauser Mountain
Proposal
MAP-1

0 1 2 3
MILES



060-027C
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	5,540
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
Total		<u>5,540</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	5,540
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>5,540</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: This WSA has been dominated primarily by natural forces and exhibits an undeveloped, primitive character. Access into the site has been limited by the surrounding private land. Potential users are discouraged by fences, locked gates, and the requirement to obtain permission from property owners. Man-made intrusions within the site are generally restricted to facilities, fences, and routes of travel needed to support the grazing

allotments, and a segment of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. These improvements are inconspicuous and do not significantly impact the naturalness of the study area.

2. Solitude: Rugged topography and dense vegetation provide opportunities for solitude throughout the unit. Use levels are low, and opportunities for solitude are available because of the area's remoteness, lack of usable vehicle routes, and unobtrusive adjacent land uses such as ranching, beekeeping, and rural residences. Rolling terrain, shallow canyons, huge rock outcrops in addition to tall, dense vegetation combined to provide the screening needed to enhance the sense of isolation.

This WSA may be overflowed in the future by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission during approved military operations. The visual intrusions and associated noise create temporary effects on solitude which are deemed acceptable and necessary as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities for primitive recreation are provided within the study area borders. This WSA currently supports light hunting, hiking, backpacking, and equestrian use. The southern end of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail passes through the area before meeting the United States-Mexico International Border. Opportunities for unconfined types of recreation are limited only by local areas of dense vegetation and some fences supporting the grazing allotment.
4. Special Features: Six plants identified as "rare" by the California Native Plant Society are known to occur within the vicinity of the area, and provide opportunities for nature study and photography. These species are Hemizonia floribunda, Ribes canthariforme, Solanum tenuilobatum, Pyrrocoma uniflora var. gossypina, Chamaebatia australis, Cupressus guadalupensis var. forbessii. Of these species, only one, Hemizonia floribunda, was found on or near Hauser Mountain. This species is found on dry slopes and valleys, roadsides, and sandy washes in coastal sage scrub, chaparral and grassland.

A portion of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail passes through the WSA from Canada to Mexico. Open to non-motorized use only, this Congressionally designated trail follows the crests of the west coast mountains from Canada to Mexico, a distance of nearly 2,500 miles.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 5,540 acres of the California Chaparral/Chaparral ecosystem. The Hauser Mountain WSA would not increase the diversity of ecosystems represented in the NWPS. The landforms present here generally reflect those of the neighboring hillsides and are contained within the Natural Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the southern California National Forests.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification <u>Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u> <u>areas</u> <u>acres</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u> <u>areas</u> <u>acres</u>	
	<u>NATIONWIDE</u>			
California Chaparral/Chaparral	17	462,256	10	81,670
	<u>CALIFORNIA</u>			
California Chaparral/Chaparral	17	462,256	10	81,670

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five hour drive of five major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population</u> <u>Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:
The WSA is within 50 air miles of five BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Hauser Wilderness Area, roughly one mile north of the WSA. Also within a 50 mile radius are the following designated wilderness areas: Pine Creek Wilderness Area, administered by Cleveland National Forest; and Cuyamaca Mountains and Anza Borrego Desert State Wilderness Areas.

C. Manageability

The Hauser Mountain WSA is manageable as wilderness. The fact that public access is restricted because of the surrounding private land enhances manageability of the area as wilderness by virtually eliminating the possibility of intrusions by vehicles.

There is one factor that would complicate manageability of the WSA. This area is situated like an island, surrounded by private lands which are experiencing increasing amounts of development pressure. As the encircling area grows, the WSA will become more and more like a large municipal park, and less like a wilderness area. The sights and sounds of the surrounding residences will impact opportunities for solitude and lessen the quality of primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The loss of wilderness values, caused by this effect, will occur despite the Bureau's management efforts.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Hauser Mountain WSA was not included in the BLM Geology-Energy-Mineral Assessment process completed in 1980. However, mineral resource data for the area was analyzed in the 1987 Final EIS for the Western County Wilderness Study Project. Mineral data in the EIS indicated that the WSA had low potential for the occurrence of potash feldspar.

The EIS stated that the WSA was found to have similar geology as the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) Hauser Mountain Wilderness Area north of the BLM WSA. The WSA is underlain by rocks consisting primarily of Bonsall tonalite and Woodson Mountain granodiorite in five igneous intrusive plutons. The potash feldspar occurs in

pegmatite dikes within the plutons. The EIS quoted the U.S. Bureau of Mines report on the Hauser Mountain Roadless Area as having no potential for the occurrence of metallic or nonmetallic mineral resources.

2. Summary of Significant New Minerals Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Decision: No U.S. Geological Survey or U. S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys were completed for this WSA because the area was recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

There were no unpatented mining claims or mineral sales, leases or permits recorded with the BLM in the WSA as of December, 1987.

E. Impacts on Resources

Table 4 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative

Issue Topics	No Wilderness/ No Action	All Wilderness Alternative
Impact on Wilderness Values	<p>The management actions under the No Wilderness/No Action proposal would have a moderate negative impact on wilderness values in the WSA. Some of the impacts on naturalness - those from motorized and nonmotorized recreationists, range improvements, and fire suppression activities - would affect less than 5 percent of the WSA. However, impacts from greatly increased levels of livestock use would affect major portions of the WSA and be evident to many visitors to the area. Prescribed burning would severely impact up to 1,000 acres, depending on how much was burned in a given year, for about a year, but the area would then recover and perceived naturalness would benefit from increases in vegetation vigor and wildlife.</p> <p>Impacts on opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation would mirror the impacts on naturalness because the opportunities depend on the naturalness of a given area.</p> <p>Special features are the scenic views and the sensitive plant, <u>Hemizonia floribunda</u>. Prescribed burns would open up some</p>	<p>Wilderness values would be retained under this alternative. Naturalness would receive minor adverse impacts on about 110 acres from visitor use along the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail and from range improvements and fire suppression activities. Opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation would receive negligible adverse impacts from the same sources. There would be no net impact on the special features of the WSA, which include scenic vistas and the sensitive plant, <u>Hemizonia floribunda</u>, under this alternative.</p>

Table 4 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative (Cont'd)

Issue Topic	No Wilderness/ No Action	All Wilderness Alternative
Impact on Wilderness Values (continued)	vistas and mar some, the impacts being temporary (2 to 4 years). <u>Hemizonia floribunda</u> would receive adverse impacts from livestock grazing and recreationists; these impacts would be counterbalanced by the beneficial effect of prescribed burning.	
Impact on Sensitive Plant Species	<u>Hemizonia floribunda</u> would receive minor adverse impacts from livestock grazing and recreational use; these impacts would be counterbalanced by the beneficial effect of prescribed burning.	Impacts on <u>Hemizonia floribunda</u> , both positive and negative, would be much less than under the Proposed Action, the net result being the same: no overall impact.
Impact on Livestock Grazing	Forage allocations to livestock would increase by 500 AUMs (300 percent) within 15 years. The forage utilization efficiencies of the operators would increase.	The forage utilization efficiencies of the operators would increase but forage allocations to livestock would remain at about 166 AUMs within the WSA.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Western Counties Wilderness Study Project EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments were mostly in agreement with the findings. Some respondents felt that grazing use should continue in the area. Others observed that rehabilitation will eliminate the visible signs of human use.
2. Draft Environmental Impact Statement: The Bureau recommended that the entire WSA be designated nonsuitable for wilderness.

Of the seventeen respondents commenting on the Hauser Mountain WSA, nine favored wilderness designation and seven opposed it. Except for the Sierra Club, which requested wilderness status for only the northern portion of the unit, all of those in favor wanted the entire WSA approved.

Three of the individuals favoring wilderness mentioned the six rare plants which are found in this region. Another stated that Hauser Mountain would be a valuable wilderness area because low-altitude ecosystems are under-represented. The area was said to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and unconfined recreation, both of which would be particularly valuable in an area so close to major population centers. The presence of a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail within the WSA was given as another factor supporting wilderness.

The U.S. Forest Service opposed wilderness, because of a State of California Off-Highway Vehicle Grant proposal to purchase rights-of-way in this area for four-wheel drive recreation. The California Department of Forestry (CDF) expressed concern that wilderness designation would interfere with its plans and methods for providing fire protection in this remote area. Other wilderness opponents mentioned the impact this status would have on mineral exploration and development. They preferred that the area be left open for these activities.

3. Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement: The Bureau maintained its nonsuitable recommendation for this WSA. The reasons were that the area would be difficult to manage for a quality wilderness experience. The unit's dense vegetation and fire history and its increasing recreational use would probably result in periodic extensive brush fires. Suppressing fires would cause considerable surface disturbance and damage wilderness values. Other areas could provide wilderness experiences equal to or better than this unit.

Forty-one comments were received in response to the SDEIS. Thirty-five favored wilderness, while six approved the Bureau's recommendations of nonsuitable for this area. Many refuted BLM's arguments against wilderness in this general region, as given in the SDEIS. They pointed out that existing wilderness management policies permit adequate fire control and pre-suppression activities. The unit is worthy of a suitable designation, they said, because it is ideal for solitude-seeking hikers, providing excellent hiking trails and outstanding opportunities for a primitive wilderness experience; this is particularly important in this area so close to a rapidly expanding population. Further, the NWPS needed the addition of a coastal sage brush ecosystem unit. Also mentioned were the six rare plants found in this unit (only one found in the unit, the remaining five are found in the general area) and the value of wilderness status in protecting both plants and animals. Wilderness would also help to protect the natural appearance of a section of the Pacific Crest Trail which passes through the WSA. One organization stated it would be satisfied with designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), but several others said this would be unsatisfactory, since mining, oil and gas drilling, off-highway vehicle use, and logging are all allowed in ACECs.

Six respondents were opposed to wilderness for this unit. An off-highway vehicle group noted that this area is a good candidate for future development of OHV recreation. The San Diego Association of Governments and the Atlantic Richfield Company opposed wilderness because of its possible impact on fire suppression and control. Also mentioned by the oil company and by a gem and mineral organization was the need for access to potential mining areas. The Cleveland National Forest and a second OHV group supported the Bureau's recommendation, saying it would provide the best management for the area.

Western Otay Mountain

CA-060-028

WESTERN OTAY MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CA-060-028)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 5,932 acres

The Western Otoy Mountain WSA is located in San Diego County, approximately 15 miles southeast of San Diego, California. The WSA includes 5,758 acres of land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and 174 acres of private inholdings (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The WSA boundary is determined on the north and west by private land boundaries. To the south, the boundary follows the Otoy Mountain Truck Trail, a road that separates this WSA from the adjacent Southern Otoy Mountain WSA. The eastern boundary follows this same trail until it intersects with the Minnewawa Truck Trail. The eastern boundary proceeds along the Minnewawa Truck Trail until it joins the WSA's northern boundary. The cluster of communication sites on Otoy Mountain are cherrystemmed.

The Otoy Mountains are a subunit of the San Ysidro Mountains. They range in elevation from approximately 400 feet along the western portions to about 3,400 feet on Otoy Mountain. The area rises above a mesa on the west, and is deeply dissected by numerous ephemeral streams. Erosion along these streams produces steep canyons which are the dominant features of this unit. The study possesses several significant plant and animal species as mentioned in the "Special Features" section.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Three different suitability recommendations were analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, prepared for the Western Counties Wilderness Study Project: no wilderness, all wilderness, and partial wilderness recommending roughly 74% of the area suitable for wilderness designation.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 4,417 acres recommended for wilderness
1,435 acres recommended for nonwilderness

Partial wilderness (74% suitable) is the recommendation for this WSA. The 1,435 acres in this WSA recommended nonsuitable are released for uses other than wilderness. In addition to the Federal acreage recommended for wilderness, BLM recommends that 94 acres of private land be acquired through exchange or purchase and designated as wilderness. With acquisition of these inholdings, a total of 4,417 acres are recommended for wilderness. Appendix 1 lists all inholdings and provides additional information on their

acquisition. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The all wilderness recommendation is environmentally preferable. This is because it would result in the least change from the existing natural environment over the long term. It is not the recommendation for this WSA, however, for the reasons described below.

The suitable portion of the WSA is so recommended because: (1) the suitable area contains outstanding wilderness values; (2) these lands possess unique vegetational character due to their relatively large stands of Tecate cypress--a rare plant indigenous to only a few localities in California and Mexico--and other rare and significant plants; (3) public sentiment overwhelmingly supported wilderness designation; and (4) designation would provide metropolitan San Diego with an adjacent 11,000 acre wilderness area, and exceptional "close in" wilderness opportunity.

Within the suitable portion of the WSA, wilderness values are outstanding. This area has been dominated by the forces of nature, and in only a few locations are the impacts of man evident. Opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are readily available throughout. The area contains many important special features which are explained in more detail in the Wilderness Characteristics section. The suitability recommendation will preclude any further vehicular use of approximately two miles of primitive access routes of travel.

The Otay Mountains are internationally renown for their diversity of unique, sensitive plants. Within the Western Otay Mountain WSA suitable area, this diversity is well represented. Stands of Tecate cypress, listed by the California Native Plant Society as rare, are located within this area. These plants are found only in small, isolated populations in the Peninsular Ranges of California and Mexico. Several other sensitive plants are located within the boundary of this WSA.

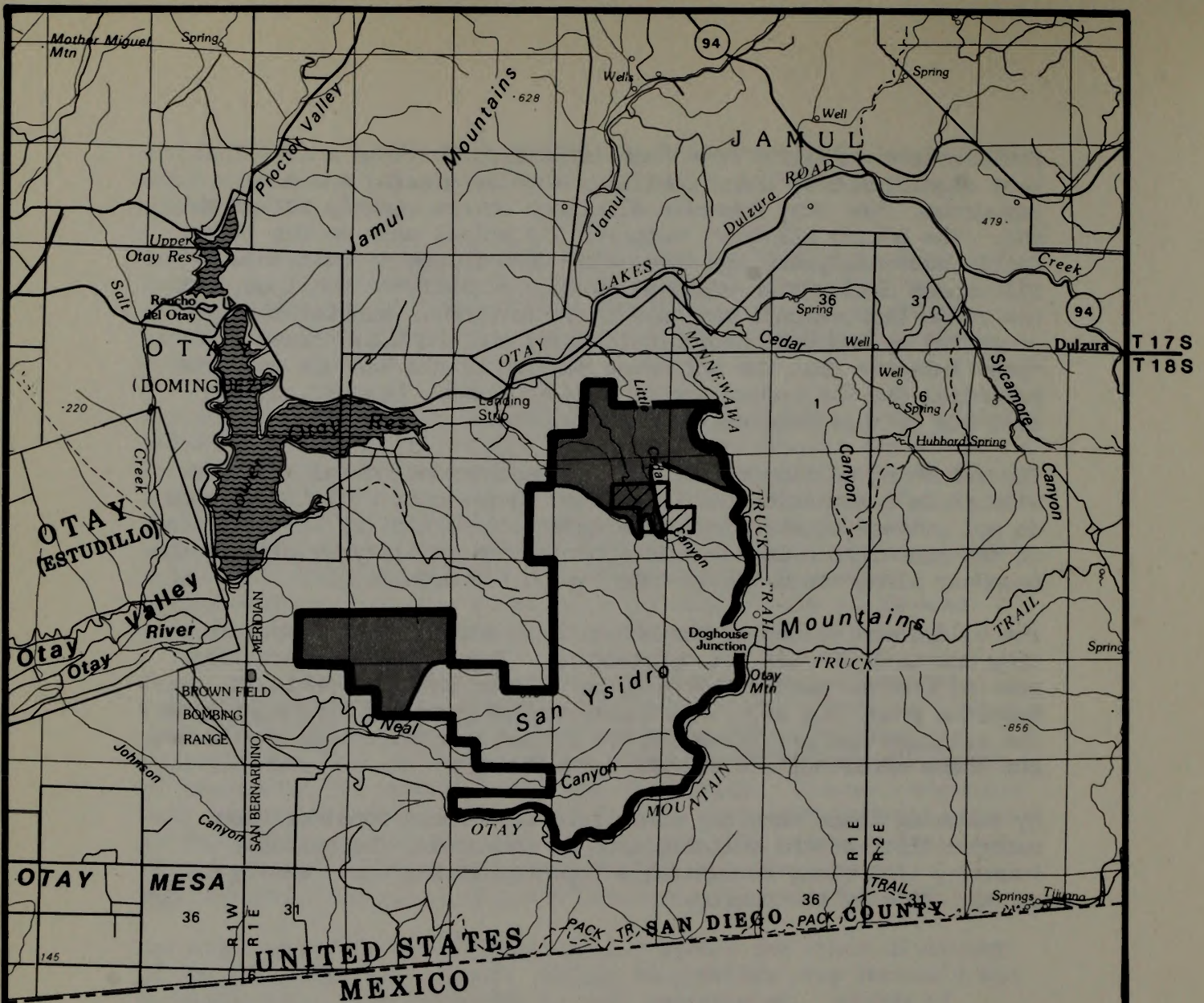
Lastly, public input regarding this WSA overwhelmingly supported wilderness designation for the site. This area, located so close to San Diego, is one of the few remaining pristine locations in western San Diego County. The public commenting on the BLM's wilderness study process expressed strongly their desires that this area remain pristine in perpetuity. An overview of public comments received during the study process is given in Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments.

Few resource conflicts have been identified for this unit. The most significant of these conflicts involve grazing and mineral resources. The Otay Mountain Allotment covers roughly 80% of this WSA. The entire allotment supports 222 animal unit months (AUM). Cattle seasonally utilize this area, when forage is available. Wilderness designation would allow this activity to continue, but new range improvements may have to be foregone. Mineral surveys conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Bureau of Mines indicate that the northwest portion of the WSA has moderate potential for the occurrence of gold and lead. However, mining activity in this area has been negligible.

The remaining portion of this WSA is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation for the following reasons: (1) these lands do not possess outstanding wilderness values; and (2) the deletion of the nonsuitable lands would improve manageability by placing the boundary along recognizable topographic features.

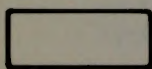


The wilderness values of the nonsuitable portion of the Western Otay Mountain WSA are not outstanding. These locations are less natural because gentler terrain has allowed entry to vehicles. Numerous primitive ways lace the nonsuitable areas. Opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are available, but these opportunities are not outstanding.


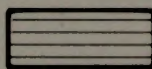

By removing these marginal lands from wilderness consideration, manageability of the suitable area is enhanced. The suitable boundary lies along recognizable topographic features, easily recognizable by the public.



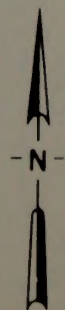
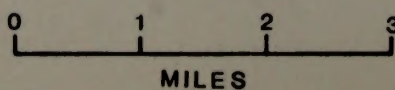
R 1 W | R 1 E

R 1 E | R 2 E

-  RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
-  RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS
-  LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

-  SPLIT ESTATE
-  STATE
-  PRIVATE

**Western Otay Mountain
Proposal
MAP-1**



060-028
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	5,758
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		174
Total		<u>5,932</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	4,323
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA) ¹	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA) ¹	<u>0</u>
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		4,323
Inholdings ¹		
State		0
Private		94
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	1,435
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>1,435</u>

¹ Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The Western Otay Mountain Wilderness Study Area has been dominated primarily by natural forces. The imprint of man's work is negligible. Within the suitable area three large concrete World War II gun emplacements which overlook the land mass to the Pacific Ocean still remain. Within the unsuitable area, a number of ways related to past uses can be found.
2. Solitude: Limited access, a varied landform and diverse vegetation patterns provide numerous areas of complete isolation. The networks of spaces generated by steep mountainsides, rock outcrops, depressions and tall, dense vegetation ensure numerous opportunities for solitude.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation abound within the WSA. The pristine nature of the environment ensures a sense of freedom and unrestricted movement. The area currently receives light hunting and hiking use, and is occasionally used by botanists and photographers interested in the unique vegetation assemblage and outstanding vistas. The area appears capable of continuing to provide outstanding opportunities for these activities for the foreseeable future.
4. Special Features: The two Otay Mountain WSAs, separately or together, provide outstanding opportunities for scientific and educational use of an unequalled and unique plant assemblage. Many officially listed and candidate plant species are locally common and found nowhere else in the United States.

Otay Mountain has long been considered a unique vegetation area. Many rare and significant plants which abound on Otay are of very limited distribution elsewhere. In 1968, Otay Mountains was listed as a "Research Natural Area" in the Directory of Federal Natural Areas. The nomination of Otay as a natural area was proposed primarily due to its relatively large stand of Tecate cypress. Many university groups and individuals have visited Otay Mountain to observe and study the flora. The San Diego Natural

History Museum has sponsored field trips up Otay as part of its program to broaden people's awareness of the natural environments of San Diego County.

Several plants on Otay Mountain are considered sensitive. Calochortus dunnii, a species of mariposa lily, has been placed on the State list of Threatened or Endangered Species. Two other plants, Otay manzanita (Arctostaphylos otayensis) and Gander's pitcher sage (Lepechinia ganderi) are BLM sensitive species. The following plants are listed by the California Native Plant Society as rare or endangered: mountain misery (Chamaebatia australis), Tecate cypress (Cupressus forbesii).

One of the critical habitats designated for the Least Bells' vireo, recently listed as endangered by both State and Federal Governments, is located along Lower Otay Reservoir, just west of Western Otay Mountain WSA. The dynamic nature of the willow habitat utilized by these birds suggests that they may utilize this area.

Within the suitable area, three large concrete World War II gun emplacements overlook the land mass to the Pacific Ocean. These emplacements are the only concrete bunker and recoilable cannon platforms remaining on the southern California coast. Although unnatural, their potential historical and interpretive value add a unique dimension to the area.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 5,758 acres of the California Chaparral/Chaparral ecosystem. Several rare vegetation associations are represented within the broad area known as Otay Mountain. These include true chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and oak woodland and the rare Tecate Cypress. This unique ecosystem would enhance the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
California Chaparral/Chaparral	17	462,256	10	81,451
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
California Chaparral/Chaparral	17	462,256	10	81,451

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Lompoc	20	1,166,142	35	528,590
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of four BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Hauser Wilderness Area, located 15 miles northeast in the Cleveland National Forest. Also with a 50 mile radius of this WSA are the

following designated wilderness areas: Pine Creek Wilderness Area, administered by Cleveland National Forest; and Cuyamaca Mountains and Anza Borrego Desert State Wilderness Areas.

C. Manageability

The Western Otay Mountain WSA is manageable as wilderness. There are no resource conflicts which will detract from manageability of this unit. The suitable area's boundaries are, in most cases, easily recognizable, delineated by either roads or distinct topographic features. Only limited signing will be required to identify the WSA's boundary where physical delineation is inadequate.

The small inholding in this WSA is accessible by jeep trail only. Development potential of this private land is limited by rugged terrain and poor access. Acquisition of this parcel will assure that the integrity of the unit is not compromised.

Outside the WSA, within O'Neal Canyon and its principal watershed are approximately 480 acres which are presently being acquired through a land exchange. These lands are essential to the effective management of the WSA as they provide access for hikers and other recreationists as well as headwaters for wildlife use.

In the nonsuitable portion, manageability would be more difficult because of the irregular boundary. Although this boundary is delineated by private land, little of it is fenced or marked in any way. Since these parcels are more accessible than the suitable area, the potential for inadvertent intrusions by motorized vehicles is a greater possibility. This boundary would require extensive signing and detailed mapping for identification by the public.

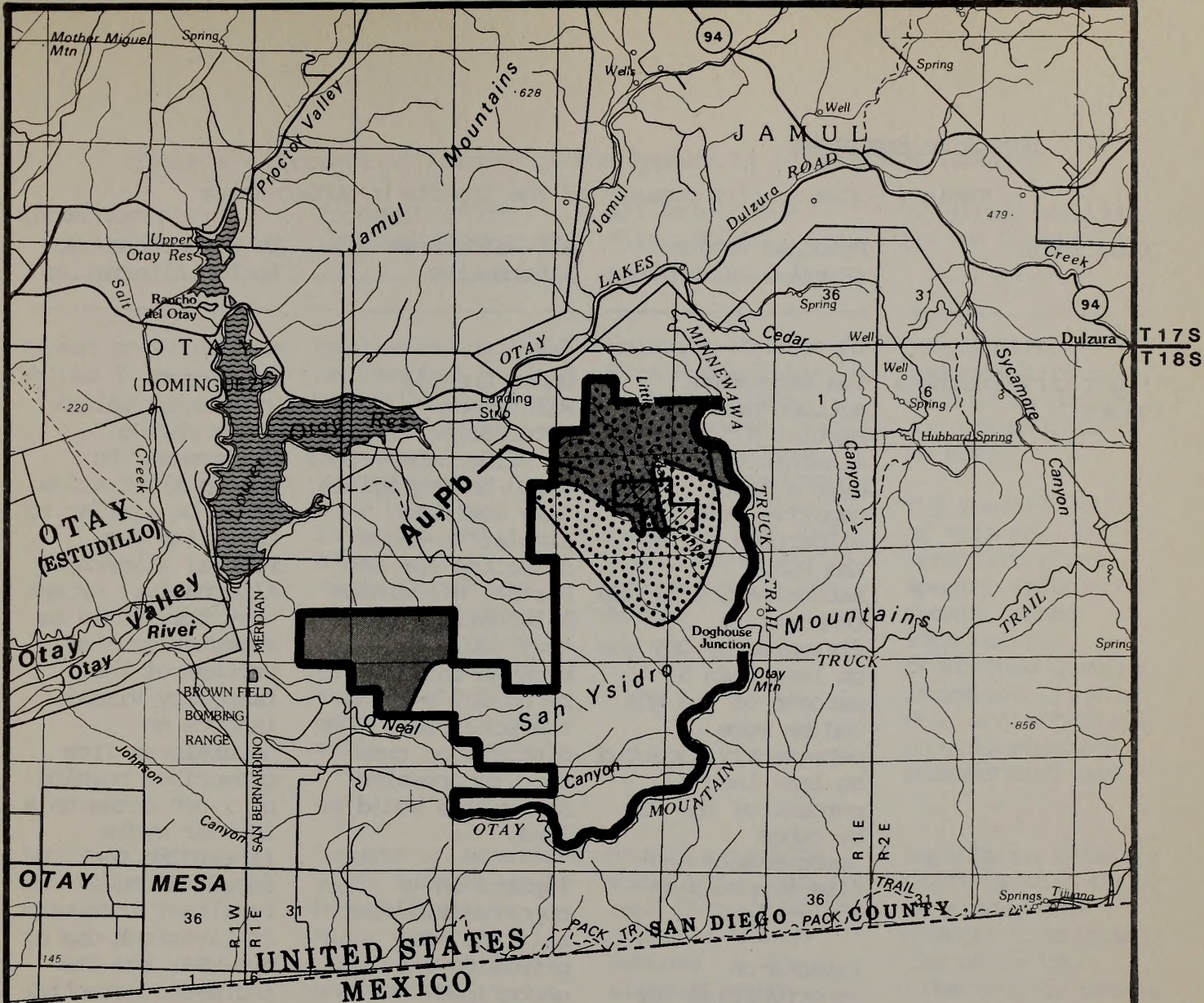
Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: A draft of a report by the U.S. Bureau of Mines was obtained from that agency before completion of the Western Counties Wilderness Study Project EIS, completed in 1987. This report found that evidence of mineralization in the WSA was not obvious. There are no known faults, quartz veins, or outcrops of granitic intrusives found within the WSA. Through literature search and field examinations of the

WSA, the BOM report found that there is no history of mining in this WSA. Although small amounts of gold were found in some stream sediments, there were no areas identified as having resources within the WSA.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and BOM conducted a mineral survey of the suitable portion of the WSA. In December, 1987, a preliminary draft copy of the USGS report was acquired by BLM. This report found, through geologic, geochemical and geophysical investigations, that the northern part of the WSA may contain metallic gold and lead resources. Analysis of two stream samples showed detectible gold and high lead values. Under the BLM classification systems, an area in the northern part of the WSA possesses moderate potential for the occurrence of gold and lead (See Map 2). As of December, 1987, no unpatented mining claims were recorded with BLM within this WSA.



R1W R1E

R1E R2E

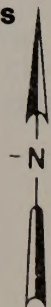
- Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

Explanation

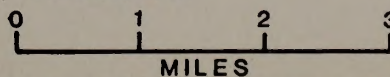
- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- Au** Gold
- Pb** Lead



Western Otoy Mountains Mineral Resource Potential



MAP-2
060-028

E. Impact on Resources

Table 4 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative

Issue Topic	Proposed Action (Partial Wilderness)	All Wilderness Alternative	No Wilderness/ No Action Alternative
Impact on Wilderness Values	<p>The management actions under the Partial Wilderness Alternative would have a minor negative impact on wilderness values in the WSA. Naturalness would be temporarily disrupted by OHV use on less than 5 percent of the WSA and be more permanently impacted on less than 1 percent of the WSA by range improvements and fire suppression activities.</p> <p>Impacts on opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation would be similar to the impacts on naturalness because those opportunities depend to a large degree on the naturalness of a given area.</p> <p>The special feature of this WSA are its sensitive plant</p>	<p>Under the All Wilderness Alternative, impacts to wilderness values would be negligible. They would be similar to those described for the Partial Wilderness Alternative, but they would be less because there would be no OHV use and the potential disturbance from fire suppression activities would be less.</p> <p>Impacts on opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation would be similar to the impacts on naturalness because those opportunities depend to a large degree on the naturalness of a given area.</p> <p>The special feature of this WSA are its sensitive plant species which would be impacted negligibly. Minor</p>	<p>Impacts to wilderness values under the No Wilderness/ No Action Alternative would be similar to those for the Partial Wilderness Alternative, except that they would be somewhat greater because of the temporary visual impacts on naturalness from prescribed burning of 1,000 acres on a 10 year cycle (including the impact of the resultant increase in livestock use of the WSA) and the increased potential for the use of heavy equipment for fire suppression activities.</p> <p>Impacts on opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation would be similar to the impacts on naturalness</p>

Table 4 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative (Cont'd)

Issue Topic	Proposed Action (Partial Wilderness)	All Wilderness Alternative	No Wilderness/ No Action Alternative
Impact on Wilderness Values (continued)	species which would be impacted negligibly. Minor negative impacts from fire suppression activities and motorized and nonmotorized recreational use would be counter-balanced by minor benefits from the acquisition of approximately 280 acres.	negative impacts for fire suppression activities and nonmotorized recreational use would be counter-balanced by minor benefits from the acquisition of approximately 280 acres.	because those opportunities depend to a large degree on the naturalness of an area. The special feature of this WSA are its sensitive plant species which would receive minor impacts from prescribed burning, increased livestock use, and motorized and nonmotorized recreational use.
Impact on Rare and Sensitive Plant Species	Impacts on sensitive plant species would be negligible. Minor negative impacts from fire suppression activities and motorized and non-motorized recreational use would be counter-balanced by minor benefits from the acquisition of approximately 280 acres.	Negative impacts would be slightly less than under the Proposed Action because of the elimination of motorized vehicle use.	Impacts on sensitive plant species would be minor, but greater than under the other two alternatives because of potential impact from prescribed burning, increased livestock use, and the fact that there would be no land acquisition.
Impact on Least Bell's Vireo Habitat	Impacts on Least Bell's vireo habitat would be negligible to light; required mitigations would prevent surface-disturbing activities.	Impacts would be the same as for the Proposed Action. Impact on Least Bell's vireo habitat would be minor, but greater than under the other	two alternatives because of potential impacts from increased livestock grazing.

Table 4 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative (Cont'd)

Issue Topic	Proposed Action (Partial Wilderness)	All Wilderness Alternative	No Wilderness/ No Action Alternative
Impact on Livestock Grazing Operations	Forage allocations to livestock would remain at 222 AUMs.	Impacts would be the same as under the Proposed Action.	Forage allocations to livestock would increase by 200 AUM (90 percent) to about 420 AUMs within 10 years.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Western Counties Wilderness Study Project EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: The public expressed a variety of viewpoints, most of which agreed with the BLM findings. Concern was expressed over protection of the Tecate cypress. The unit has outstanding scenic vistas and provides excellent hiking opportunities. Comments were made about communication sites and their access roads; however, these are rights-of-way outside the inventory unit.
2. Draft Environmental Impact Statement: The Bureau recommended that roughly 5,600 acres of the area be designated suitable for wilderness, and that the remaining acreage be released from wilderness consideration.

Of the 23 responses to the DEIS specific to Western Otay Mountain, six agreed with the Bureau's recommendation. Eight of those who commented wanted a wilderness recommendation for the entire unit; four favored an ACEC instead of wilderness; three were against any wilderness in this unit; and two were concerned only with fire protection in this area.

Wilderness proponents noted that this unit, which is part of the Peninsular Range geomorphic province, harbors a highly unique and fragile faunal assemblage, including numerous species of reptiles of extremely limited distribution in the United States. Due to the intergrading of desert and coastal influences, species diversity of other groups is also unusually high in this area. This ecosystem needs to be represented in the NWPS. Wilderness is also badly needed in this area which is suffering from urban intrusion. Protection of the Tecate cypress was also important to several respondents.

The State of California Department of Forestry and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) wanted further information about proposed pre- and post-suppression fire management techniques. There was concern about wildfires crossing international boundaries. A utility company noted the need for access to communication facilities on Otay Mountain, for both law enforcement and emergency services. Those respondents who preferred an ACEC designation stated that it would be adequate to protect wildlife and rare plants, especially the Tecate cypress, while allowing appropriate methods for fire protection.

Reasons given for opposing wilderness for this unit were: solitude is hard to achieve because of the small size of the unit; protection of wildlife and plants from fire hazards would be difficult under wilderness management policies; the need for access for protection against entry of illegal aliens. One mining organization wrote that it could accept the BLM's recommendation if all areas with mining claims and mineral potential were excluded from wilderness designation.

3. Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement: The Bureau recommended the entire Western Otay WSA as nonsuitable for wilderness designation. However, because of the unique diversity of sensitive plant species, an ACEC designation was recommended. This would allow scientific research and education, as well as a wider variety of fire management techniques than would be possible under wilderness management.

Forty-nine letters were received in response to the SDEIS; 44 of these favored wilderness for this area. Most respondents expressed shock and dismay at the Bureau's new recommendation for this WSA. Six of the 44 were willing to return to the original recommendation of partial wilderness; the rest wanted the entire unit to be recommended suitable. Reasons for favoring wilderness included: Otay Mountain is a unique accessible primitive area, conveniently close to an urban center; it is an outstanding botanical area, containing rare and endangered

plants; wilderness is the best way to protect these valuable species (an ACEC would be inadequate); this area is the near-coast high-elevation point in San Diego and provides a novel coastal experience. Respondents stated that the above facts outweighed the management difficulties with respect to fire protection, though many also pointed out that official wilderness policies allow prescribed burning and hand tools for pre- and post-suppression activities. The City of San Diego remarked that it should be a goal of wilderness designation to allow ecosystems to function by natural plant succession following fires and that this goal would be appropriate at Otay Mountain, which is a natural, isolated area. The Board of Supervisors of San Diego County also favored wilderness for this unit, as did two staff members at the San Diego State University who noted that it would not curtail their research on the Tecate cypress.

Two respondents concurred with BLM's recommendation of an ACEC in this area, while one was in total disagreement. A third point of view put forth by the Sierra Club was to have both wilderness and an ACEC.

The SANDAG, the California Department of Forestry, Atlantic Richfield Company, and the San Diego Gem and Mineral Society opposed wilderness for Otay Mountain because of its potential effect on fire protection. SANDAG was also concerned about an ACEC designation, although the gem and mineral club recommended it. The Department of Forestry stated that rare and endangered plants could not be properly managed under wilderness status. Other concerns of wilderness opponents were trespass of illegal aliens, closing of access for mineral exploration and development, and interference with a possible new OHV park.

The State of California Parks and Recreation Department wrote that San Diego County has proposed an OHV recreation area in Otay Mesa which would be adjacent to and just west of both the Western and Southern Otay Mountain WSAs. This possibility should be considered in reaching decisions on these WSAs.

APPENDIX 1
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN AND ADJACENT TO
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION
WESTERN OTAY MOUNTAINS WSA (CA-060-028)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				TOTAL ACREAGE	NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	
	TWNSHP	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN			SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)
1	18S.	1E.	10	SBM	120	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	300.0	6.0
2	18S.	1E.	11	SBM	40	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	80.0	5.0
3	18S.	1E.	20	SBM	200	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	1000.0	8.0
4	18S.	1E.	21	SBM	40	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
5	18S.	1E.	28	SBM	160	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
6	18S.	1E.	29	SBM	80	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0

These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.

Southern Otay Mountain

CA-060-029

SOUTHERN OTAY MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CA-060-029)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 8,548 acres

The Southern Otoy Mountain WSA is located in San Diego County, approximately 15 miles east of San Diego, California. The WSA includes 8,055 acres of BLM lands and private inholdings totaling 493 acres.

The northern border of the WSA coincides with the Otoy Mountain Truck Trail which separates this unit from the Western Otoy Mountain WSA. The eastern, western and a portion of the southern border are bounded by private land. The remainder of the southern boundary lies along the United States-Mexico International Border.

This unit is part of the San Ysidro Mountains block of the Peninsular Range geomorphic province, and ranges in elevation from approximately 800 feet at the southwestern boundary to 3,550 feet near the northern boundary. This area is the eastern portion of the San Ysidro Mountain mass and is deeply incised by numerous ephemeral streams. These streams have cut steep narrow canyons into the hillsides, and these canyons are the area's dominant feature. The study area contains several unique species of plants and animals as described in the Special Features section.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Three different suitability recommendations were analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), prepared for the Western Counties Wilderness Study Project: no wilderness, all wilderness, and partial wilderness in which roughly 90% of the area is recommended for wilderness designation.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 7,276 acres recommended for wilderness
1,272 acres recommended for nonwilderness

Partial wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The 1,272 acres in this WSA recommended non-suitable are released for uses other than wilderness. In addition to the Federal acreage recommended for wilderness, BLM recommends that 480 acres of private land be acquired through purchase or exchange and designated as wilderness. With acquisition of these inholdings, a total of 7,276 acres are recommended for wilderness. Appendix 1 lists all inholdings and provides additional information on their acquisition. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The suitable portion of the WSA is so recommended because: (1) the suitable area contains outstanding wilderness values; (2) these lands possess unique vegetational character due to their relatively large stands of Tecate cypress--a rare plant indigenous to only a few localities in California and Mexico--and other rare and significant plants; (3) public sentiment overwhelmingly supported wilderness designation; and (4) designation would provide metropolitan San Diego with an adjacent 11,000 acre wilderness area, and exceptional "close in" wilderness opportunity.

Within the suitable portion of the WSA, wilderness values are outstanding. This area has been dominated by the forces of nature, and in only a few locations are the impacts of man evident. Opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are readily available throughout. The area contains many important special features which are explained in more detail in the Wilderness Characteristics section. The suitability recommendation will preclude any further vehicular use of approximately two miles of primitive access routes of travel.

The Otay Mountains are internationally renowned for their diversity of unique, sensitive plants. Within the Southern Otay Mountain WSA suitable area, this diversity is well represented. Stands of Tecate cypress, listed by the California Native Plant Society as rare, are located within this area. These plants are found only in small, isolated populations in the Peninsular Ranges of California and Mexico. Several other sensitive plants are located within the boundary of this WSA.

Lastly, public input regarding this WSA overwhelmingly supported wilderness designation for the site. This area, located close to San Diego, is one of the few remaining pristine locations in western San Diego County. The public commenting on the BLM's wilderness study process expressed strongly their desires that this area remain pristine in perpetuity. An overview of public comments received during the study process is given in Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments.

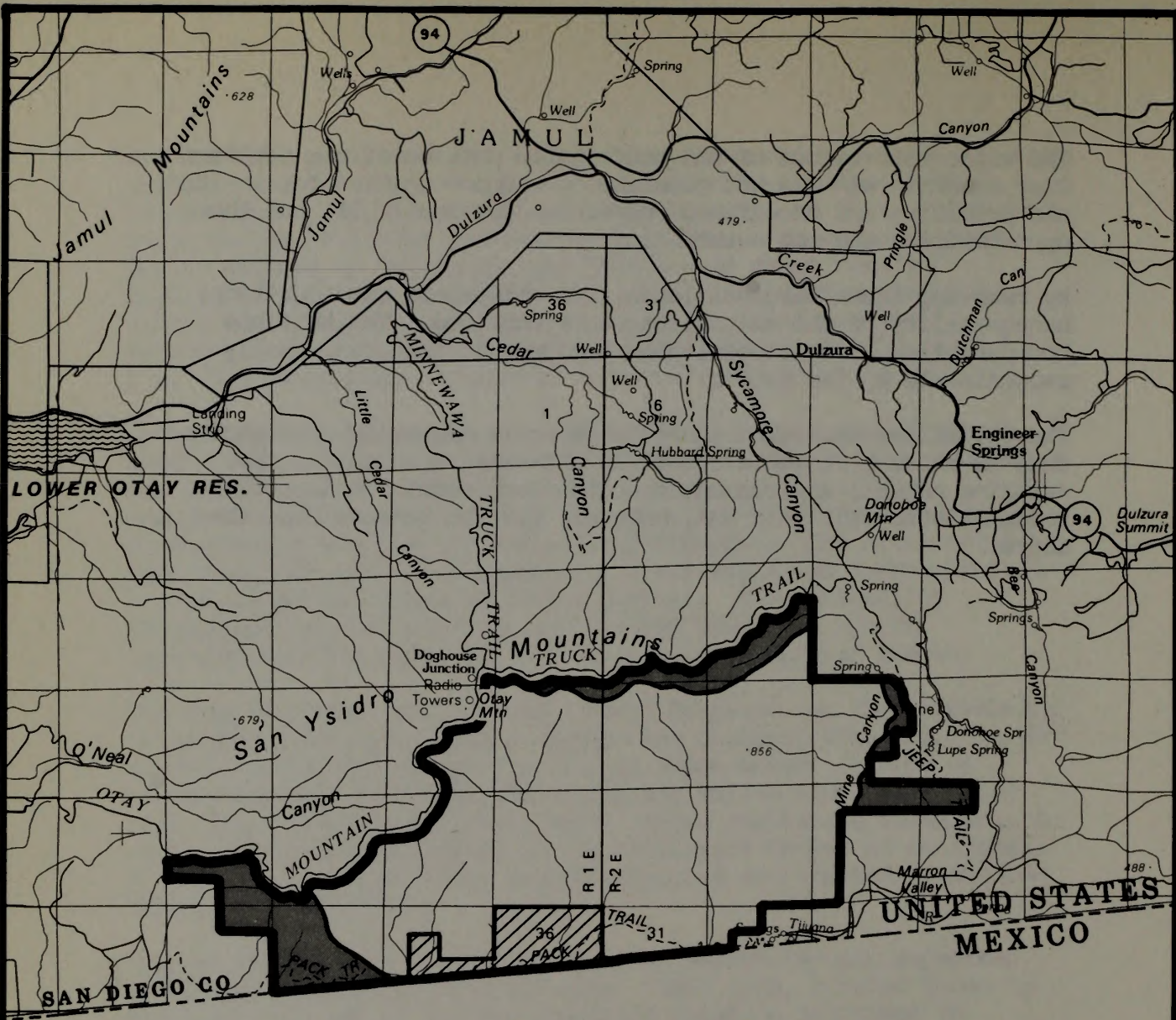
In the Southern Otay Mountain WSA few resource conflicts exist. Unlike neighboring Western Otay Mountain WSA, here grazing is allowed on less than two percent of the WSA. One area in the northeast portion of the WSA possesses moderate potential for the occurrence of gold. However, mining activity in this area has been negligible.

The remaining portion of this WSA is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation for the following reasons: (1) these lands do not possess outstanding wilderness values; and (2) the deletion of the nonsuitable lands would improve manageability by placing the boundary along recognizable topographic features.

The wilderness values of the nonsuitable portion of the Southern Otay Mountain WSA are not outstanding. Opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are available, but these opportunities are not outstanding.

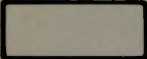


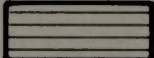


By removing these marginal lands from wilderness consideration, manageability of the suitable area is enhanced. The suitable boundary lies along recognizable topographic features, easily recognizable by the public.

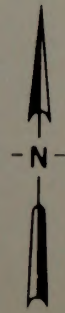
The all wilderness recommendation is environmentally preferable. This is because it would result in the least change from the existing natural environment over the long term. It is not the recommendation for this WSA, however, for the reasons described above.



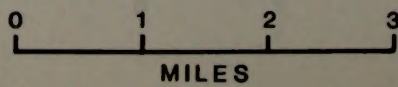
T17S
T18S

R1E R2E

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------|
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | PRIVATE |



**Southern Otay Mountains
Proposal
MAP-1**



060-029
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	8,055
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		493
Total		<u>8,548</u>
 <u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		 <u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	6,783
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA) ¹	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA) ¹	<u>0</u>
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		6,783
Inholdings ¹		
State		0
Private		493
 <u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		 <u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	1,272
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>1,272</u>

¹ Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The Southern Otay Mountain WSA has been dominated primarily by natural forces. The imprint of man's work is negligible. Within the WSA, evidence of man is limited to fire breaks, now becoming overgrown and indistinct.
2. Solitude: A varied landform and diverse vegetation patterns provide numerous areas of complete isolation. The networks of spaces generated by steep mountainsides, rock outcrops, depressions and tall, dense vegetation ensure numerous opportunities for solitude.
3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation abound within the WSA. The pristine nature of the environment ensures a sense of freedom and unrestricted movement. The area currently receives light hunting and hiking use, and is occasionally used by botanists and photographers interested in the unique vegetation assemblage and outstanding vistas. The area appears capable of continuing to provide outstanding opportunities for these activities for the foreseeable future.
4. Special Features: The two Otay Mountain WSAs, separately or together, provide outstanding opportunities for scientific and educational use of an unequalled and unique plant assemblage. Many officially listed and candidate plant species are locally common and found nowhere else in the United States.

Otay Mountain has long been considered a unique vegetation area. Many rare and significant plants which abound on Otay are of very limited distribution elsewhere. In 1968, Otay Mountains was listed as a "Research Natural Area" in the Directory of Federal Natural Areas. The nomination of Otay as a natural area was proposed primarily due to its relatively large stand of Tecate cypress. Many university groups and individuals have visited Otay Mountain to observe and study the flora. The San Diego Natural History Museum has sponsored field trips up Otay Mountain as part of its program to broaden people's awareness of the natural environments of San Diego County.

Several plants on Otay Mountain are considered sensitive. Calochortus dunnii, a species of mariposa lily, has been placed on the State list of Threatened or Endangered Species. Two other plants, Otay manzanita (Arctostaphylos otayensis) and Gander's pitcher sage (Lepechinia ganderi) are BLM sensitive species. The following plants are

listed by the California Native Plant Society as rare or endangered: mountain misery (Chamaebatia australis), Tecate cypress (Cupressus forbesii).

Miles-long vistas allow the visitor to visually explore the border area of Mexico along the Tia Juana River and into the mountainous spine of northern Baja California. The vistas are unsurmounted anywhere on the southern California coastline.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 8,055 acres of the California Chaparral/Chaparral ecosystem. Several vegetative associations are represented within the broad area known as Otay Mountain. These include true chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and oak woodland. This unique area would enhance the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
California Chaparral/Chapparal	17	462,256	10	79,155
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
California Chaparral/Chapparal	17	462,256	10	79,155

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Lompoc	20	1,166,142	35	528,590
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:
The WSA is within 50 air miles of four BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Hauser Wilderness Area, located 15 miles northeast in the Cleveland National Forest. Also within a 50 mile radius of this WSA are the following designated wilderness areas: Pine Creek Wilderness Area, administered by Cleveland National Forest; and Cuyamaca Mountains and Anza Borrego Desert State Wilderness Areas.

C. Manageability

The Southern Otay Mountain WSA is manageable as wilderness. There are no resource conflicts which will preclude or significantly detract from manageability of this unit. The suitable area's boundaries are, in most cases, easily recognizable, delineated by either roads or distinct topographic features. Only limited signing will be required to identify the WSA's boundary where physical delineation is inadequate.

The small inholding in this WSA is inaccessible. Development potential of this private land is limited by rugged terrain and poor access. Acquisition of this parcel will assure that the integrity of the unit is not compromised.

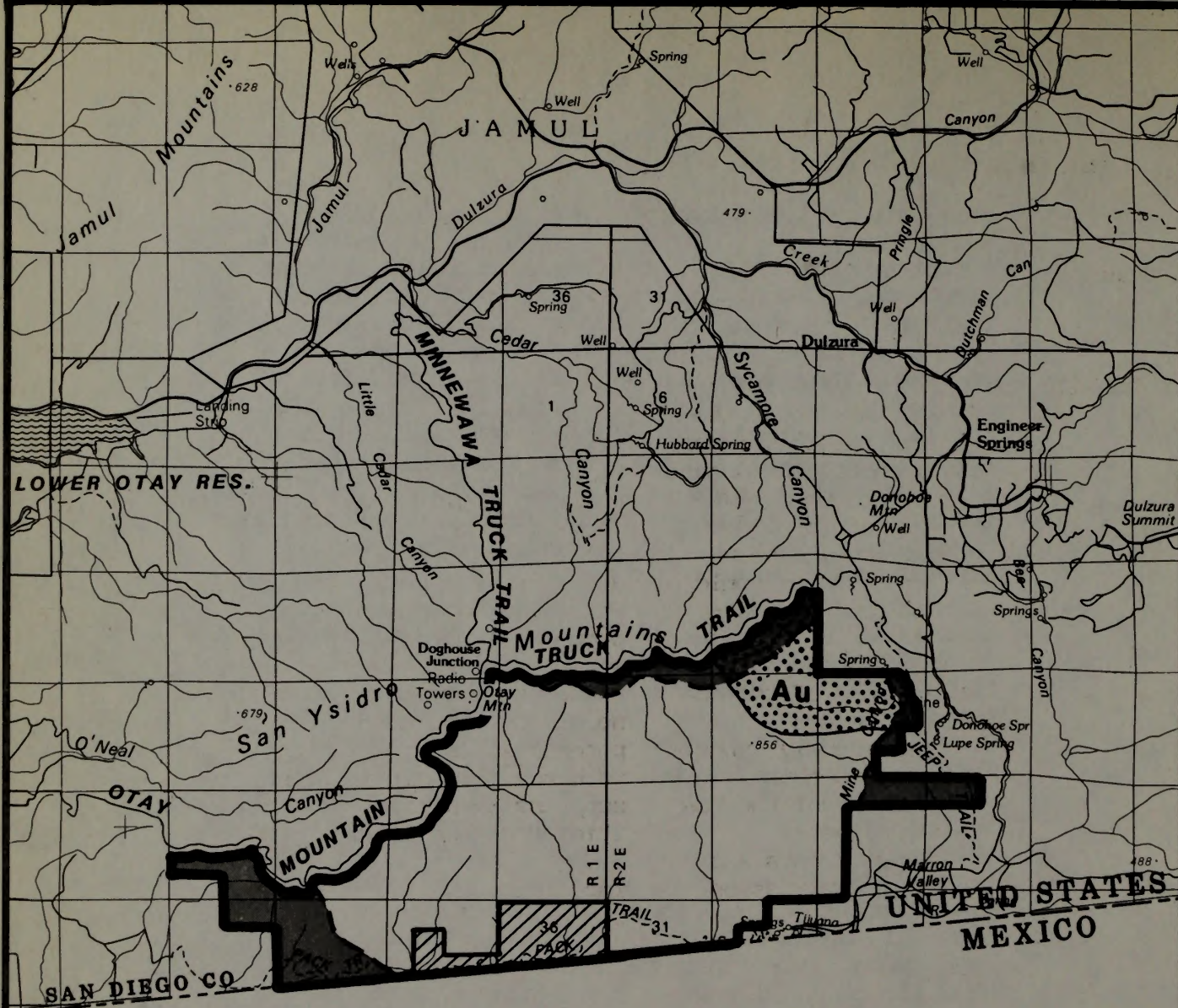
In the nonsuitable portion, manageability would be more difficult because of the irregular boundary. Although this boundary is delineated by private land, little of it is fenced or marked in any way. Since these parcels are more accessible than the suitable area, the potential for inadvertent intrusions by motorized vehicles is a greater possibility. This boundary would require extensive signing and detailed mapping for identification by the public.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: A draft of a report by the U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) was obtained for this WSA by the BLM before completion of the Western Counties Wilderness Study Project EIS. The report found that evidence of mineralization in the WSA was not obvious. There are no known faults, quartz veins, or outcrops of granitic intrusives found within the WSA. The earliest mining activity near this WSA occurred in the Mine Canyon area, adjacent to the WSA's east boundary. Although small amounts of gold were found in some stream sediments, there were no areas identified as having high or moderate potential for the occurrence of metallic mineral resources within the WSA.
2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Decision: The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and BOM conducted a mineral survey of the recommended suitable portion of the WSA. In December, 1987, a preliminary draft copy of the USGS report was acquired by BLM. The preliminary draft report concluded that, based on data from geologic, geochemical and geophysical investigations, the northeast part of the WSA may contain metallic gold resources. Historically, mining has occurred along the fault in the east wall of Mine Canyon, just outside the WSA. Development was in granitic and metamorphic rocks as free gold in sheared quartz veins. Slightly anomalous concentrations of gold, silver, tungsten, zinc, antimony, and arsenic in rocks and stream sediments within the WSA suggest that mineralization may occur in the eastern portion of the WSA. Although classified by USGS as having low potential for gold, under the BLM classification system for occurrence potential, this area has a moderated potential for the occurrence of gold resources. Claims located in or near the WSA include the Bonanza and Silver Queen mining claims, situated along the Otay Mountain Truck Trail, and the W&T claims in Mine Canyon. Mineral interest in the WSA is further indicated by the following BLM records dated December, 1987.

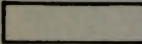

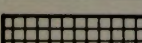
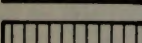
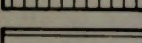
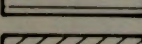
Table 4 Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIMS						
Lode	2	0	2	40	0	40
Placer	7	0	7	280	0	280
Mill Sites	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	9	0	9	320	0	320





T 17 S
T 18 S

R 1 E R 2 E

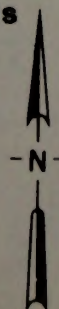
-  Recommended for Wilderness
-  Recommended for Non Wilderness
-  Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
-  Split Estate
-  State
-  Private

Explanation

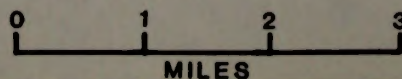
-  High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
-  Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

Au Gold



**Southern Otoy Mountains
Mineral Resource Potential**



**MAP-2
060-029**

E. Impact on Resources

Table 5 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative

Issue Topic	Proposed Action (Partial Wilderness)	All Wilderness Alternative	No Wilderness Alternative
Impact on Wilderness Values	<p>The management actions under the Partial Wilderness proposal would have a minor negative impact on wilderness values in the WSA. Naturalness would be temporarily disrupted by OHV use on less than five percent of the WSA and be more permanently impacted on less than 1 percent of the WSA by range improvements and fire suppression activities.</p> <p>Impacts on opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation would be similar to the impacts on naturalness because those opportunities depend to a large degree on the naturalness of a given area.</p> <p>The special features of this WSA are its sensitive plant species which would be impacted negligibly. Minor negative impacts from fire suppression activities and</p>	<p>Under the All Wilderness Alternative, impacts to wilderness values would be negligible. They would be similar to those described for the Partial Wilderness proposal, but they would be less because there would be no OHV use and the potential disturbance from fire suppression activities would be less.</p> <p>Impacts on opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation would be similar to the impacts on naturalness because those opportunities depend to a large degree on the naturalness of a given area.</p> <p>The special features of this WSA are its sensitive plant species which would be impacted negligibly. Minor negative impacts from fire suppression activities and nonmotorized</p>	<p>Impacts to wilderness values under the No wilderness/No Action Alternative would be similar to those for the Partial Wilderness proposal, except that they would be somewhat greater because of the temporary visual impacts on naturalness from prescribed burning of 1,000 acres on a ten year cycle (including the impact of the resultant increase in livestock use of the WSA) and the increased potential for the use of heavy equipment for fire suppression activities.</p> <p>Impacts on opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation would be similar to the impact on naturalness because those opportunities depend to a large degree on the naturalness of a given area.</p> <p>The special features</p>

Table 5 - Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative (Cont'd)

Issue Topic	Proposed Action (Partial Wilderness)	All Wilderness Alternative	No Wilderness/ No Action Alternative
Impact on Wilderness Values (continued)	motorized and non-motorized recreational use would be counterbalanced by minor benefits from the acquisition of approximately 480 acres.	recreational use would be counterbalanced by minor benefits from the acquisition of approximately 480 acres.	of this WSA are its sensitive plant species which would receive minor impacts from prescribed burning, increased livestock use, and motorized and nonmotorized recreational use.
Impact on Rare and Sensitive Plant Species	Impacts on sensitive plant species would be negligible. Minor negative impacts from fire suppression activities and motorized and nonmotorized recreational use would be counterbalanced by minor benefits from the acquisition of approximately 480 acres.	Negative impacts would be slightly less than under the Proposed Action because of the elimination of motorized recreational use.	Impacts on sensitive plant species would be minor, but greater than under the other two alternatives because of potential impacts from prescribed burning, increased livestock use, and the fact that there would be no land acquisition.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Western Counties Wilderness Study Project EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: The public expressed a variety of viewpoints, most of which agreed with the BLM findings. Concern was expressed over protection of the rare Tecate

cypress. The unit has outstanding scenic vistas and provides excellent hiking opportunities. Comments were made about communication sites and their access roads; however, these are rights-of-way outside the inventory unit.

2. Draft Environmental Impact Statement: The Bureau recommended that 5,084 acres of this unit be designated suitable for wilderness, and that the remaining acreage be released for other uses.

Of the 23 responses to the DEIS specific to Southern Otay Mountain, six agreed with the Bureau's recommendation. Eight of those who commented wanted a wilderness recommendation for the entire unit; four favored an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) instead of wilderness; three were against any wilderness in this unit; and two were concerned only with fire protection in this area.

Wilderness proponents noted that this unit, which is part of the Peninsular Range geomorphic province, harbors a highly unique and fragile faunal assemblage, including numerous species of reptiles of extremely limited distribution in the United States. Due to the intergrading of desert and coastal influences, species diversity of other groups is also unusually high in this area. This ecosystem needs to be represented in the NWPS. Wilderness is also badly needed in this area which is suffering from urban intrusion. Protection of the Tecate cypress was also important to several respondents.

The California Department of Forestry (CDF) and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) wanted further information about proposed pre- and post-suppression fire management techniques. There was concern about wildfires crossing international boundaries. A utility company noted the need for access to communication facilities on Otay Mountain, for both law enforcement and emergency services. Those respondents who preferred an ACEC designation stated that it would be adequate to protect wildlife and rare plants, especially the Tecate cypress, while allowing appropriate methods for fire protection.

Reasons given for opposing wilderness for this unit were: solitude is hard to achieve because of the small size of the unit; protection of wildlife and plants from fire hazards would be difficult under wilderness management policies; the need for access for protection against entry of illegal aliens. One mining organization wrote that it could accept the BLM's recommendation if all areas with mining claims and mineral potential were excluded from wilderness designation.

3. Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS):
The Bureau recommended the entire Southern Otay WSA as nonsuitable for wilderness designation. However, because of the unique diversity of sensitive plant species, an ACEC designation was recommended. This would allow scientific research and education, as well as a wider variety of fire management techniques than would be possible under wilderness management.

Forty-nine letters were received in response to the SDEIS; 44 of these favored wilderness for this area. Most respondents expressed shock and dismay at the Bureau's new recommendation for this WSA. Six of the 44 were willing to return to the original recommendation of partial wilderness; the rest wanted the entire unit to be recommended suitable. Reasons for favoring wilderness included: Otay Mountain is a unique accessible primitive area, conveniently close to an urban center; it is an outstanding botanical area, containing rare and endangered plants; wilderness is the best way to protect these valuable species (an ACEC would be inadequate); this area is the near-coast high-elevation point in San Diego and provides a novel coastal experience. Respondents stated that the above facts outweighed the management difficulties with respect to fire protection, though many also pointed out that official wilderness policies allow prescribed burning and hand tools for pre- and post-suppression activities. The City of San Diego remarked that it should be a goal of wilderness designation to allow ecosystems to function by natural plant succession following fires and that this goal would be appropriate at Otay Mountain, which is a natural, isolated area. The Board of Supervisors of San Diego County also favored wilderness for this unit, as did two staff members at the San Diego State University who noted that it would not curtail their research on the Tecate cypress.

Two respondents concurred with BLM's recommendation of an ACEC in this area, while one was in total disagreement. A third point of view put forth by the Sierra Club was to have both wilderness and an ACEC.

SANDAG, CDF, Atlantic Richfield Company, and the San Diego Gem and Mineral Society opposed wilderness for Otay Mountain because of its potential effect on fire protection. SANDAG was also concerned about an ACEC designation, although the gem and mineral club recommended it. CDF stated that rare and endangered plants could not be properly managed under wilderness status. Other concerns of wilderness opponents were trespass of illegal aliens, closing of access for mineral exploration and development, and interference with a possible new OHV park.

The California Parks and Recreation Department wrote that San Diego County has proposed an OHV recreation area in Otay Mesa which would be adjacent to and just west of both the Western and Southern Otay Mountain WSAs. This possibility should be considered in reaching decisions on these WSAs.

APPENDIX 1
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION
SOUTHERN OTAY MOUNTAINS WSA (CA-060-029)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				TOTAL ACREAGE	NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	
	TWNSHP	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN			SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)
1	18S.	1E.	35	SBM	116.9	1	PRIVATE	FEDERAL	YES	PURCHASE	1,184.0	7.0
2	18S.	1E.	36	SBM	364.2	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	1,457.0	7.0

These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.

McAffee Creek

CDCA 100

McAFEE CREEK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-100)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 438 acres

The McAfee Creek WSA is located in Mono County at the northern tip of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The community of Bishop is 40 miles to the southwest. The WSA includes 438 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northeast border of this triangle shaped WSA is the California-Nevada state line. Inyo National Forest borders to the west and a well maintained access road forms the southern border.

The WSA was included for further consideration during the planning process only because it adjoined an area in the Inyo National Forest that was being evaluated for potential wilderness designation.

The terrain is predominately flat and rolling. The foothills to the adjacent White Mountains begin at the western edge of the WSA. The elevation ranges from 4,972 to 5,520 feet. The WSA is wholly alluvial fan.

The WSA was studied under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan, protection, use, balanced, and no action, and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 0 acres recommended for wilderness
438 acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the McAfee Creek WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. Future activities in the area will be controlled by low intensity management as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

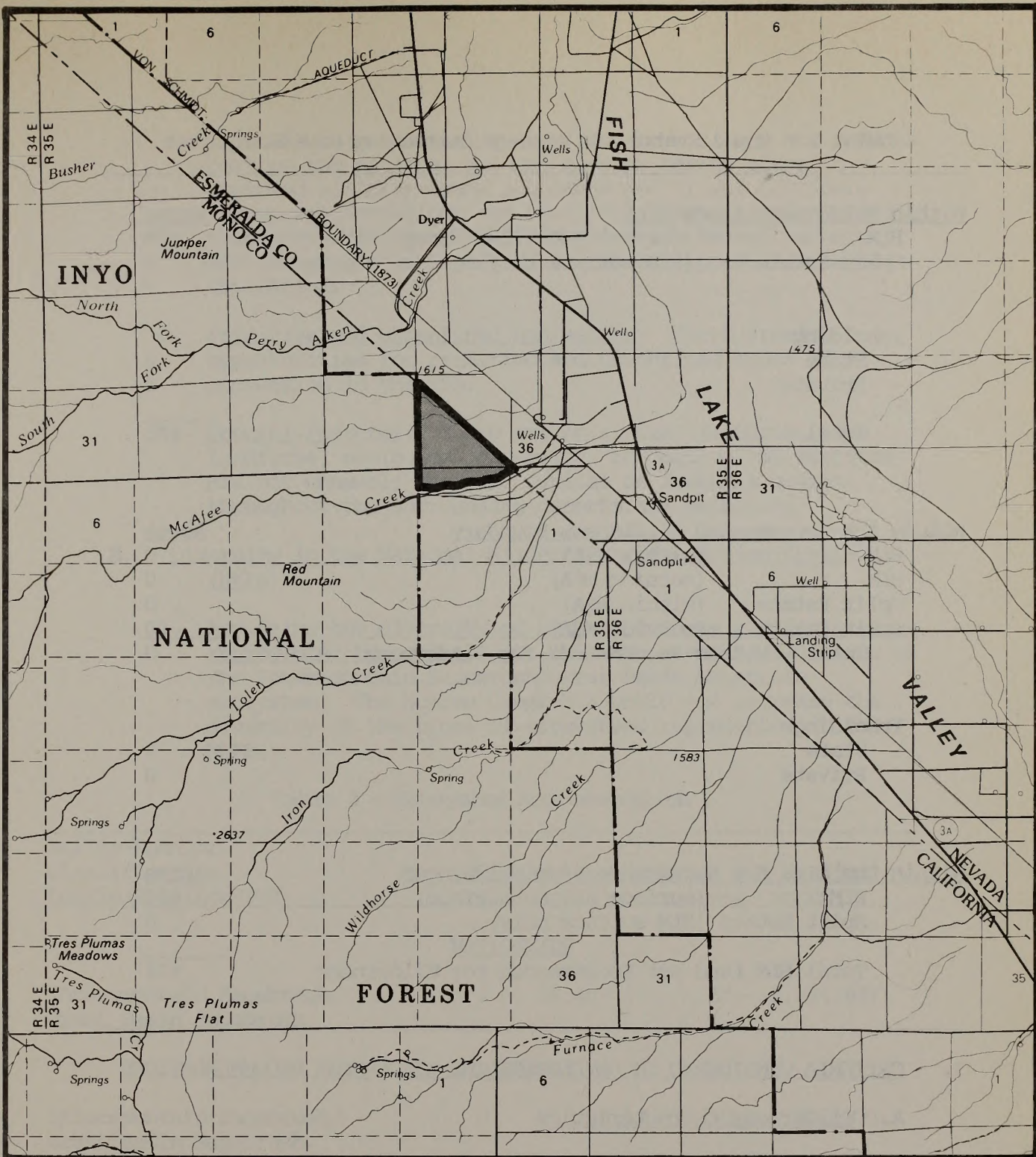
The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The wilderness values in the McAfee WSA do not stand on their own merit. The WSA was originally delineated during development of the CDCA Plan as a natural extension of an area being considered for wilderness in the adjacent Inyo National Forest. It was recognized, however, that the WSA was not manageable as wilderness unless the adjacent area in the Forest was also designated wilderness. The adjacent area in the Inyo National Forest was not designated wilderness. There are no known routes of travel within the WSA.

Designation of the area as wilderness would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Other WSAs in the California Desert that are recommended suitable offer a much more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values. The wildlife and vegetative resources within the area are typical of the surrounding desert. The area contains no unusual plants or State or Federally listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species. The WSA is within the Fishlake Valley Grazing Allotment and also lies within an area of high cultural resource sensitivity. The entire Inyo National Forest and surrounding areas have been traditionally employed by the Paiute and Panamint Shoshone Indians.

Portions of the WSA have moderate potentials for gold and uranium. Currently there are no unpatented mining claims in the WSA.

The WSA is not manageable as wilderness. There are few quality opportunities for solitude or opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. A right-of-way and associated water diversion structure and pipeline impact the naturalness of the southern portion of the WSA. The scenic quality of the area is considered blase. The spectacular White Mountains in the adjacent National Forest completely dwarf the WSA.



NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



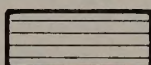
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



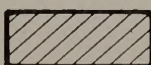
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



SPLIT ESTATE

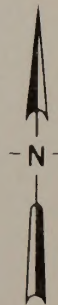
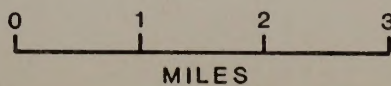


STATE



PRIVATE

**McAfee Creek
Proposal
MAP-1**



CDCA-100
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	438
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
Total		<u>438</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	<u>0</u>
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	438
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>438</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: This triangular shaped WSA has been primarily affected by the forces of nature, with the exception of the water diversion facilities that run the entire width of the WSA.
2. Solitude: Outstanding opportunities for solitude are nearly non-existent due to a lack of topographic variation.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: There are few opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation in the WSA.
4. Special Features: There are no special features. The landforms, ecological diversity, and geological features are not unusual; they are typical of features common throughout the surrounding deserts and mountains.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 438 acres of the Intermountain Sagebrush/Great Basin Sagebrush ecosystem. The McAfee Creek WSA would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	1	32,407	55	1,204,837
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	0	0	19	220,371

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of three major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	1,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:
The WSA is within 50 air miles of three BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation, one of which is located in the State of Nevada. The closest designated wilderness area is John Muir Wilderness, administered by Inyo National Forest, 35 miles west of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The McAfee Creek WSA is not manageable as wilderness. It is less than one mile in width at its widest point and only one and one-half miles long. The northeast and west boundaries are straight lines that follow no discernable features on-the-ground. The continued maintenance of the water diversion structure require access, thus increasing the manageability of the area.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The McAfee Creek WSA is located in the BLM Fishlake Valley Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M narrative in the wilderness section of the CDCA plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) stated that the WSA has potential for uranium and thorium and a favorable geologic environment for sand, gravel, crushed rock, and base-precious metal deposits. As of December 12, 1979, there were no unpatented mining claims located in the WSA on record with the BLM.

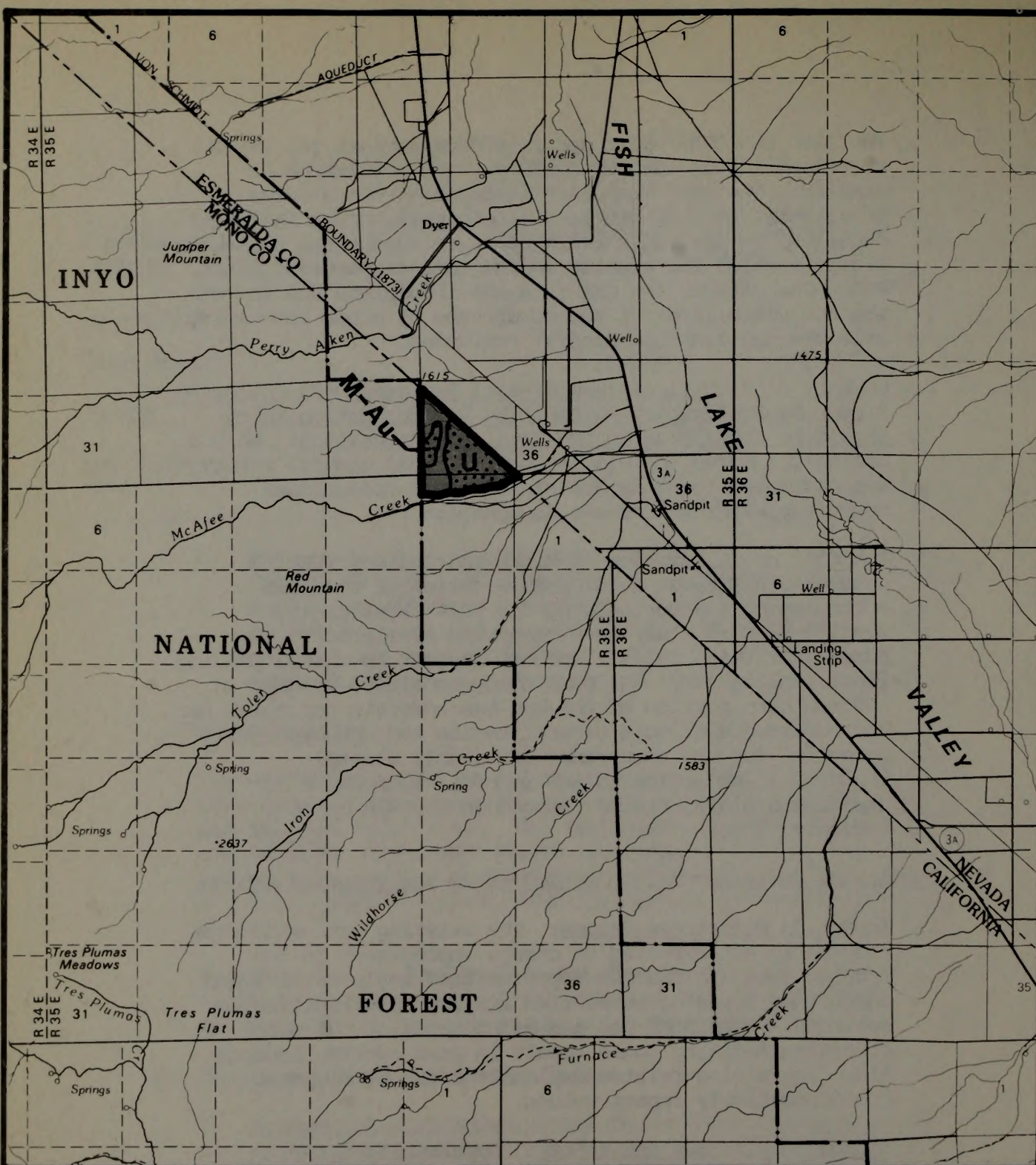
The 1980 BLM GRA report and file data support the G-E-M statement in the 1980 CDCA EIS for the occurrence of uranium. The 1980 BLM GRA file documented a uranium occurrence and a favorable geologic environment (alluvial deposits) as the basis for a moderate occurrence potential classification for uranium in the eastern portion of the WSA. The data in the GRA file was incomplete and the WSA was not classified for the occurrence of other locatable, saleable and leasable mineral resources.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral survey was completed for this WSA since it was recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) completed a Mineral Land Classification of the area encompassing and surrounding the WSA. Preliminary results of this study have been made available to the Bureau for this analysis and are subject to change pending final publication. The CDMG study concluded an area in the southern portion of the WSA has moderate potential for the occurrence of gold mineralization and unknown potential for the occurrence of salable mineral resources. According to BLM records, there were no unpatented mining claims located in the WSA as of February, 1988.

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: The existing naturalness of the WSA is not expected to change appreciably in the future. The WSA has few opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation and few opportunities for solitude. Continued use and maintenance of the water diversion facility could result in some adverse impacts. Also, any mining related exploration and development could negatively impact values.
2. Impact on Minerals and Energy: Opportunities for exploration and development of minerals and energy would continue to be available subject to applicable laws, regulations and the low intensity management guidelines established in the CDCA Plan.



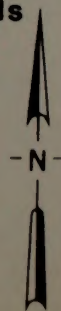
- | | | |
|--|------|---|
| | NONE | Recommended for Wilderness |
| | | Recommended for Non Wilderness |
| | | Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness |
| | | Split Estate |
| | | State |
| | | Private |

Explanation

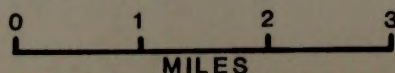
- | | |
|----------|--|
| | High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| | Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| M | Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area |
| H | High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area |

Commodity Symbols

- Au** Gold
U Uranium



McAfee Creek
Mineral Resource Potential



MAP-2
CDCA-100

3. Impact on Native American Concerns and Cultural Resource Values: These sensitive resources would continue to receive protection by applicable laws and regulations. The low intensity land use prescription for the WSA, as stated in the CDCA Plan, would further reduce the likelihood for adverse impacts to known cultural sites. Traditional methods of access would continue to be available for access to Native American collection sites.
4. Impact on Livestock Management: Opportunities would continue to be available for development of new range improvements to better manage livestock to utilize the forage produced on the public lands.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Specific comments mentioned the natural integrity of the area and its contiguity to a RARE II area.
2. Study Phase: Sixteen letters were received on McAfee Creek WSA. Ten favored wilderness designation, four opposed it, and two were neutral. Two of these in opposition dealt with 2(c) criteria, including roads, structures, and other evidences of human uses. The other two were concerned with uses which they felt should be allowed in the area, specifically, mining and four-wheel drive vehicles. One respondent stated that the inventory had been rushed and the WSAs include roads and areas smaller than the 5,000-acre minimum required by the 2(c) criteria. Most of the letters favoring wilderness designation mentioned the fulfillment of Section 2(c) criteria and the contiguity of McAfee Creek WSA to RARE II lands. Several respondents stated that BLM wilderness would buffer the RARE II lands and enhance their management. It was also noted that wilderness designation would aid in protection of wildlife, specifically the Cottonwood Creek Paiute Trout and the black toad, found at Antelope Springs. Recreation such as hiking, camping and

backpacking would be enhanced, and other qualities such as clean air historic mining values, geologic interpretation, and nature study would be protected.

It was also recommended that wilderness designation be coordinated with the State of Nevada in this area with a border common to both states and that WSA's 100 through 107 should be combined into one study area.

One comment was received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). It recommended wilderness status.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to McAfee Creek WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives were received. However, this WSA was opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSA within the CDCA. The County of Mono's Board of Supervisors supported wilderness designation for this area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were almost no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle groups and conservation organizations maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Plan Alternatives, as did the Mono County Board of Supervisors.

North Tip

CDCA 100A

NORTH TIP WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-100A)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 252 acres

The North Tip WSA is located in Mono County at the extreme northern tip of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The community of Bishop is 40 miles to the southwest. The WSA includes 252 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northeast border of this triangle shaped WSA is the California - Nevada state line. Inyo National Forest borders to the south and west.

The WSA was included for further consideration during the planning process only because it adjoined an area in the Inyo National Forest that was being evaluated for potential wilderness designation.

The entire WSA is an alluvial fan. The terrain is rolling to steep, sloping toward the east. Elevations vary from 5,360 to 6,296 feet.

The WSA was studied under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan, protection, use, balanced, and no action, and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 0 acres recommended for wilderness
252 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the North Tip WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. Future activities in the area will be controlled by low intensity management as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

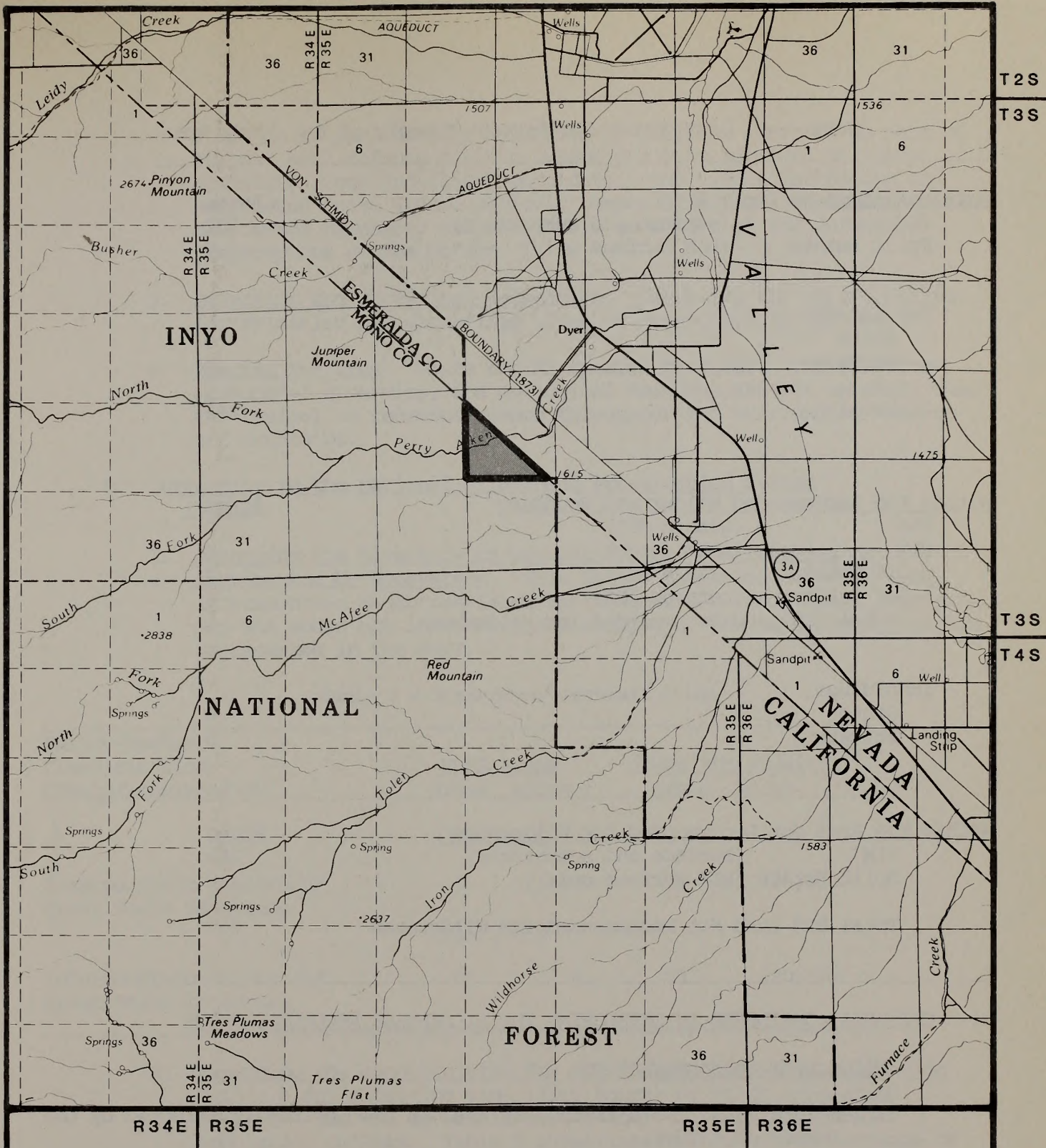
The wilderness values in the North Tip WSA do not stand on their own merit. The WSA was originally delineated during development of the CDCA Plan as a natural extension of an area being considered for wilderness in the adjacent Inyo National Forest. It was recognized, however, that the WSA was not manageable as wilderness unless the adjacent area in the Forest was also designated wilderness. The adjacent area in the Inyo National Forest was not designated wilderness.

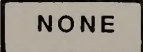


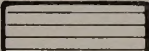

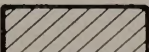
Designation of the area as wilderness would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). Other WSAs in the California Desert that are recommended suitable offer a much more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values. There are no known primitive routes of travel within the WSA.

The wildlife and vegetative resources within the area are typical of the surrounding desert. The area contains no unusual plants or State or Federally listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species. The WSA is within the Fishlake Valley Grazing Allotment and also lies within an area of high cultural resource sensitivity. The entire Inyo National Forest and surrounding areas have been traditionally employed by the Paiute and Panamint Shoshone.

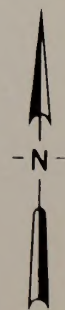
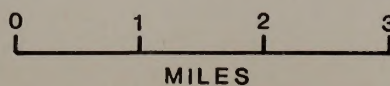
The northern one-third and southern one-half of the WSA have moderate potentials for gold. Currently there are no unpatented mining claims in the WSA.

The WSA is not manageable as wilderness. There are few quality opportunities for solitude or opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Although the imprints of man are few, the scenic values of this tiny isolated WSA are marginal. The spectacular White Mountains in the adjacent National Forest completely dominate the scenery of the WSA.



	NONE	RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS		SPLIT ESTATE
		RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS		STATE
		LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS		PRIVATE

North Tip
Proposal
MAP-1



CDCA-100A
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	252
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
Total		<u>252</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	<u>0</u>
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	252
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>252</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: This triangular WSA has been primarily affected by the forces of nature.
2. Solitude: Outstanding opportunities for solitude are nearly non-existent due to a lack of topographic screening.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: There are few opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation in the WSA.
4. Special Features: There are no special features. The landforms, ecological diversity, and geological features are not unusual, they are typical of features common throughout the surrounding deserts and mountains.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 252 acres of the Intermountain Sagebrush/Great Basin Sagebrush ecosystem. The North Tip WSA would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	1	32,407	55	1,205,023
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	0	0	19	220,557

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of three major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of three BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation, one of which is located in the State of Nevada. The closest designated wilderness area is John Muir Wilderness, administered by Inyo National Forest, 35 miles west of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The North Tip WSA is not manageable as wilderness. It is just over one-half mile in width at its widest point and approximately one mile long. The boundaries are straight lines that follow no discernable features on the ground.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The North Tip WSA is located in the BLM Fishlake Valley Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M narrative in the wilderness section of the CDCA plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) stated that the WSA has potential for uranium and thorium and a favorable geologic environment for sand, gravel, and metallic mineral deposits. As of December 12, 1979, there were no unpatented mining claims located in the WSA on record with the BLM.

The 1980 BLM GRA report and file data do not support the G-E-M statement in the 1980 CDCA EIS. The 1980 BLM GRA file did not classify the WSA for locatable, salable and leasable mineral resources due to lack of sufficient information.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral survey was completed for this WSA since it was recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation.

The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) completed a Mineral Land Classification of the area encompassing and surrounding the WSA. Preliminary results of this study have been made available to the Bureau for this analysis and are subject to change pending final publication. The CDMG study concluded that the northern one-third and southern one-half of the WSA have moderate potential for the occurrence of gold mineralization based on field inspections of prospects in the area. The entire WSA was classified as having an unknown potential for the occurrence of industrial (sand, gravel, crushed rock) mineral resources.

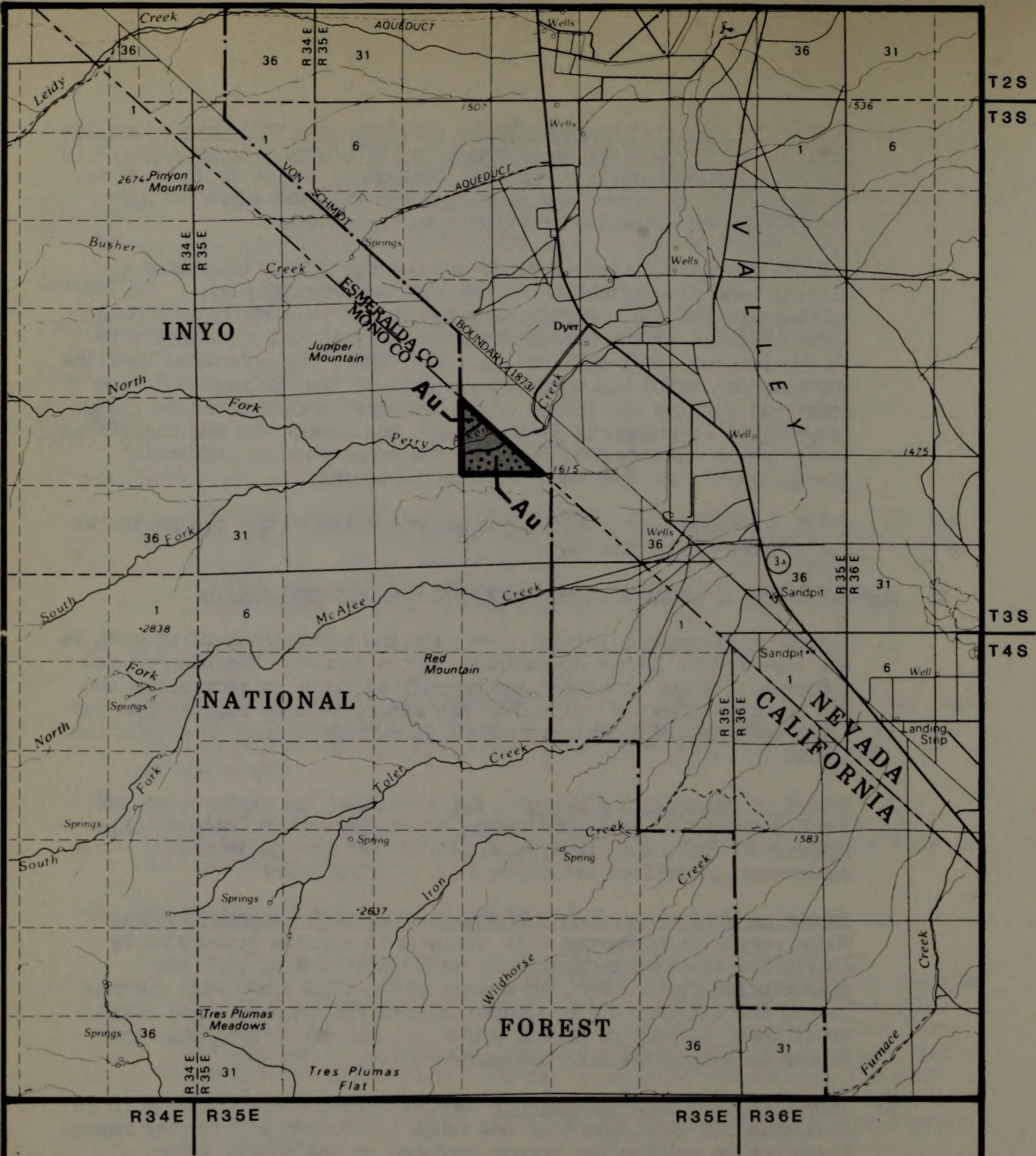
As of February, 1988, there were no unpatented mining claims in the WSA on record with the BLM.

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: The existing naturalness of the WSA is not expected to change appreciably in the future. The WSA has few opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation and few opportunities for solitude. Any mining related exploration and development could negatively impact wilderness values on a localized basis.
2. Impact on Minerals and Energy: Opportunities for exploration and development of minerals and energy would continue to be available subject to applicable laws, regulations and the low intensity management guidelines established in the CDCA Plan.
3. Impact on Native American Concerns and Cultural Resource Values: These sensitive resources will continue to receive protection by applicable laws and regulations. The low intensity land use prescription for the WSA, as stated in the CDCA Plan, will further reduce the likelihood for adverse impacts to known cultural sites. Traditional methods of access would continue to be available for access to Native American collection sites.
4. Impact on Livestock Management: Opportunities would continue to be available for development of new range improvements to better manage livestock to utilize the forage produced on the public lands.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.



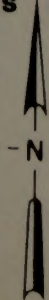
- | | | |
|--|------|---|
| | NONE | Recommended for Wilderness |
| | | Recommended for Non Wilderness |
| | | Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness |
| | | Split Estate |
| | | State |
| | | Private |

Explanation

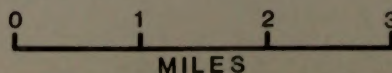
- | | |
|----------|--|
| | High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| | Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| M | Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area |
| H | High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area |

Commodity Symbols

Au Gold



North Tip
Mineral Resource Potential



MAP-2
CDCA-100A

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: The majority of comments received agreed with the findings.
2. Study Phase: Sixteen letters were received on this WSA. Ten were in favor of wilderness designation, four opposed it, and two were neutral. Most of the letters in favor of wilderness status mentioned the fulfillment of Section 2(c) criteria and the contiguity of this WSA to RARE II lands. Several respondents stated that BLM wilderness would buffer the RARE II lands and enhance their management. It was also noted that wilderness designation would aid in protection of wildlife, especially the Cottonwood Creek Paiute trout and the black toad, found at Antelope Springs. Recreation such as hiking, camping and backpacking would be enhanced, and other qualities such as clean air historic mining values, geologic interpretation, and nature study would be protected.

Two of the respondents opposing wilderness designation dealt with the failure to meet the Section 2(c) criteria, due to the presence of roads, structures, and other evidences of human uses. The other two were concerned with uses which they felt should be allowed in the area, specifically, mining and four wheel drive vehicles. One respondent stated that the inventory had been rushed and the WSAs include roads and areas smaller than the 5000 acre minimum required by the 2(c) criteria.

It was also recommended that wilderness designation be coordinated with the State of Nevada in this area with a border common to both states and that WSAs 100 through 107 should be combined into one study area.

One comment was received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). It recommended wilderness status for the WSA (CDCA-100A).

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments were received specific to the North Tip WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position.

Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSA within the CDCA. The County of Mono's Board of Supervisors supported wilderness designation for this area.

4. Proposed Plan: There were almost no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle groups and conservation organizations maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Plan Alternatives, as did the Mono County Board of Supervisors.

Toler Creek

CDCA 101

TOLER CREEK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-101)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 1,122 acres

The Toler Creek WSA is located in Mono County at the northern tip of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The community of Bishop is 40 miles to the southwest. The WSA includes 1,122 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northeast border of the WSA is the California - Nevada stateline. A maintained gravel access road forms the northern border and the Inyo National Forest borders to the west and the south. The eastern border is also a maintained gravel access road.

The WSA was included for further consideration during the planning process only because it adjoined an area in the Inyo National Forest that was being evaluated for potential wilderness designation.

The WSA consists of approximately 75% alluvial fans and 25% mountains. The terrain is flat to rolling in the eastern half, whereas the western half contains foothills to the White Mountains. Elevations range from 4,960 to 6,300 feet.

The WSA was studied under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan, protection, use, balanced, and no action, and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 0 acres recommended for wilderness
1,122 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Toler Creek WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. Future activities in the area will be controlled by low intensity management as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The wilderness values in the Toler WSA do not stand on their own merit. The WSA was originally delineated during development of the CDCA Plan, as a natural extension of an area being considered for wilderness in the adjacent

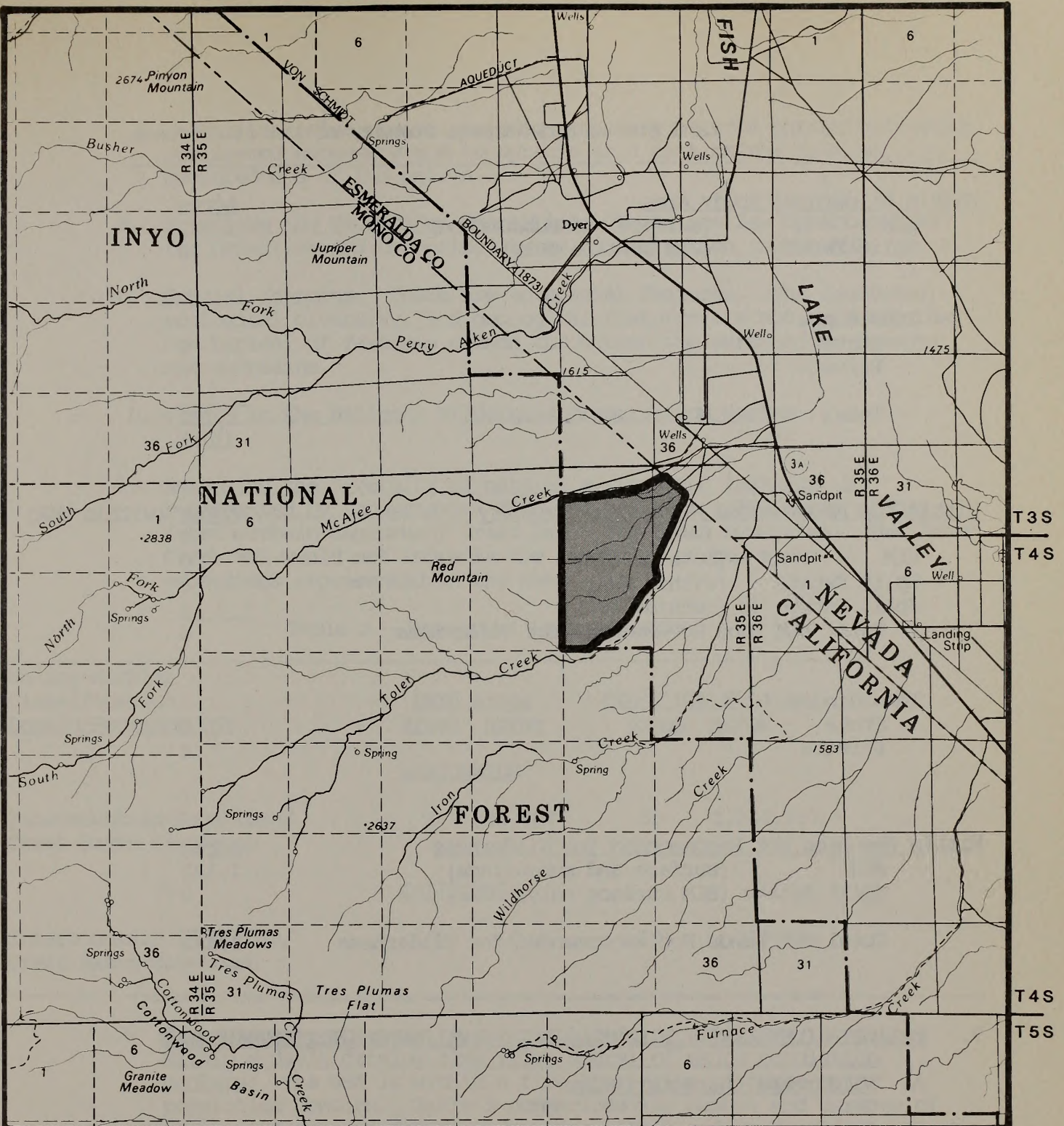
Inyo National Forest. It was recognized, however, that the WSA was not manageable as wilderness unless the adjacent area in the Forest was also designated wilderness. The adjacent area in the Inyo National Forest was not designated wilderness. There is approximately one mile of route of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

Designation of this area as wilderness would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Other WSAs in the California Desert that are recommended suitable offer a much more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values.

The wildlife and vegetative resources within the area are typical of the surrounding desert. The area contains no unusual plants or State or Federally listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species. The WSA includes portions of the Whitewater Grazing Allotment and also lies within an area of high cultural resource sensitivity. The entire Inyo National Forest and surrounding areas have been traditionally employed by the Paiute and Panamint Shoshone Indians.

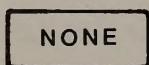
Portions of the WSA have moderate potentials for uranium and gold. Currently there are no mining claims in the WSA.

The WSA is not manageable as wilderness. There are few quality opportunities for solitude or opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. There is some evidence of historic mining in the area. The scenery in the WSA is commonplace. The spectacular White Mountains in the adjacent National Forest completely overwhelm any minor values that may occur within Toler Creek.



R34E R35E

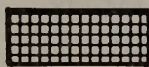
R35E R36E



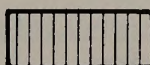
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



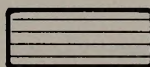
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



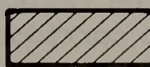
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



SPLIT ESTATE

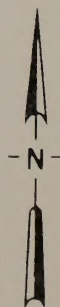
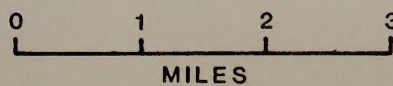


STATE



PRIVATE

**Toler Creek
Proposal
MAP-1**



CDCA-101
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	1,122
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
Total		<u>1,122</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u> (within WSA)
		0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	<u>0</u>
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	1,122
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>1,122</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: This WSA has been primarily affected by the forces of nature with the exception a route of travel traversing the foothills in the northern portion.
2. Solitude: Outstanding opportunities for solitude are few due to lack of topographic variation.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and

associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: There are few opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation in the WSA.
4. Special Features: There are no special features. The landforms, ecological diversity, and geological features are not unusual; they are typical of features common throughout the surrounding deserts and mountains.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 1,122 acres of the Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush ecosystem. The Toler Creek WSA would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	1	32,407	55	1,204,153
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	0	0	19	219,687

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of three major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u> <u>California</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of three BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation, one of which is located in the State of Nevada. The closest designated wilderness area is John Muir Wilderness, administered by Inyo National Forest, 35 miles west of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Toler Creek WSA is not manageable as wilderness. It is just one mile in width at its widest point and two miles in length at its longest point. The south and west boundaries are straight lines that follow no discernable features on-the-ground.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of information known at the time of the preliminary suitability recommendation: The Toler Creek WSA is located in the BLM Fishlake Valley Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M narrative in the wilderness section of the CDCA plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) stated that the WSA has potential for uranium and thorium and a favorable geologic environment for sand, gravel, and metallic mineral deposits. As of December 12, 1979, there were no unpatented mining claims located in the WSA on record with the BLM.

The 1980 BLM GRA report and file data support the G-E-M statement in the 1980 CDCA EIS for uranium. The eastern portion of the WSA was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA file as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium based on a documented occurrence and a favorable geologic environment (alluvial deposits). The 1980 BLM GRA file did not classify the WSA for locatable, salable and leasable mineral resources due to lack of sufficient information.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral survey was completed for this WSA since it was recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The State of California Division of Mines and Geology (DMG) has completed a Mineral Land Classification of the area encompassing and surrounding the WSA. Preliminary results of this study have been made available to the Bureau for this analysis and are subject to change pending final publication. The DMG study concluded that the southwestern portion of the WSA has a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold mineralization based on field inspections of prospects in the area. The entire WSA was classified as having an unknown potential for the occurrence of industrial (sand, gravel, crushed rock) mineral resources.

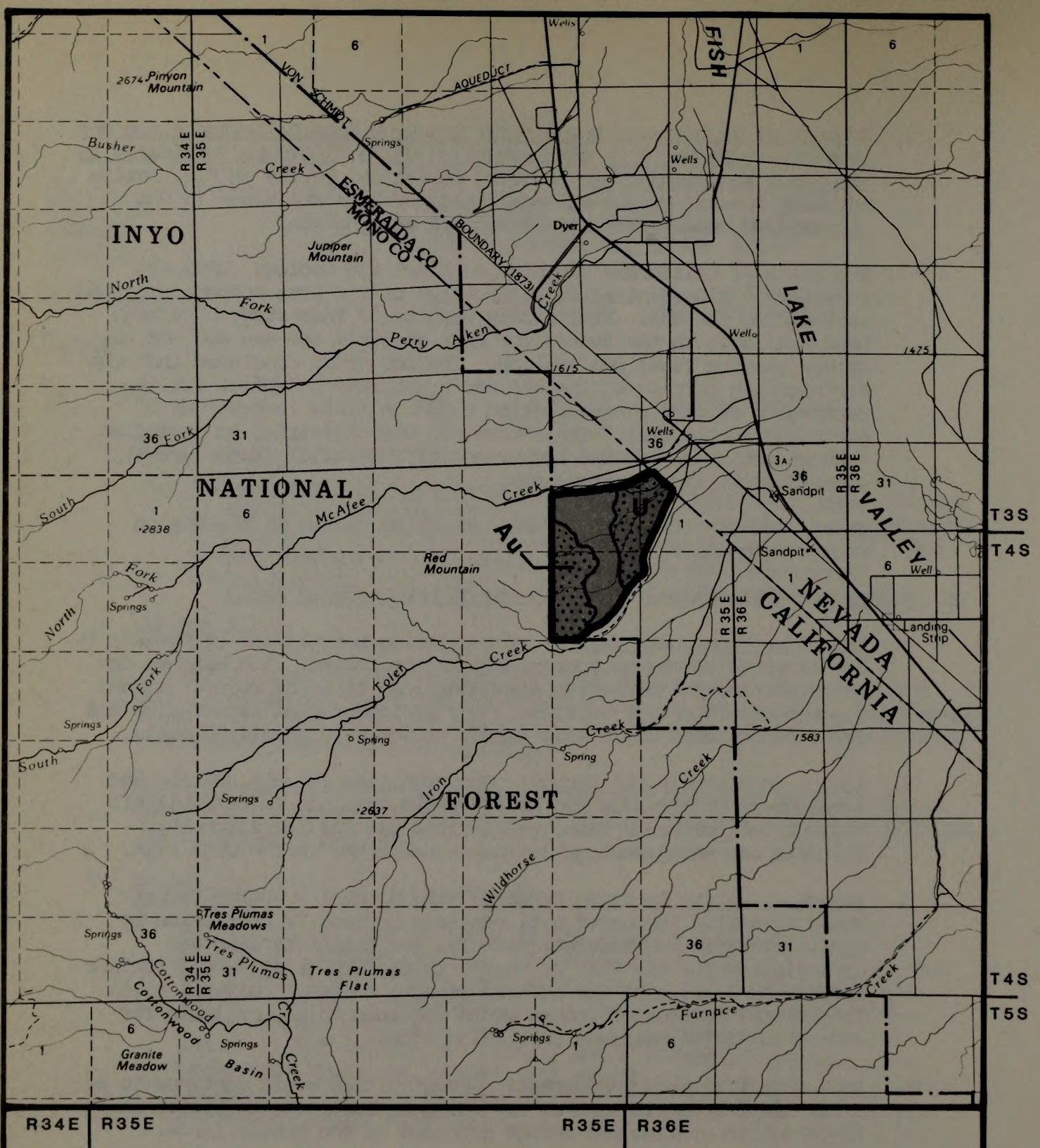
As of February, 1988, there were no mining claims in the WSA on record with the BIM.

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: The existing naturalness of the WSA is not expected to change appreciably in the future. The WSA has few opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation and few opportunities for solitude. Any mining related exploration and development could negatively impact values on a localized basis.
2. Impact on Minerals and Energy: Opportunities for exploration and development of minerals and energy would continue to be available subject to applicable laws, regulations and the low intensity multiple use management guidelines established in the CDCA Plan.
3. Impact on Native American Concerns and Cultural Resource Values: These sensitive resources will continue to receive protection by applicable laws and regulations. The low intensity land use prescription for the WSA, as stated in the CDCA Plan, would further reduce the likelihood for adverse impacts to known cultural sites. Traditional methods of access would continue to be available for access to Native American collection sites.
4. Impact on Livestock Management: Opportunities would continue to be available for development of new range improvements to better manage livestock to utilize the forage produced on the public lands.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.



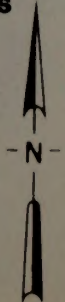
- | | |
|------|---|
| NONE | Recommended for Wilderness |
| | Recommended for Non Wilderness |
| | Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness |
| | Split Estate |
| | State |
| | Private |

Explanation

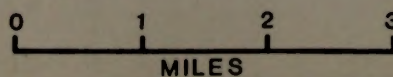
- | | |
|---|--|
| | High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| | Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| M | Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area |
| H | High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area |

Commodity Symbols

- Au** Gold
U Uranium



Toler Creek
Mineral Resource Potential



MAP-2
CDCA-101

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Specific comments received supported the inventory findings.
2. Study Phase: Approximately two-thirds of the comments received on this WSA favored wilderness designation. Many gave as reasons the contiguity of RARE II lands or the need to protect wildlife, particularly the Cottonwood Creek Paiute trout and the black toad. Some were concerned with preserving air quality and geologic and scenic values which make this a fine hiking area.

Respondents who opposed wilderness designation were concerned about access for mineral exploration and development, livestock grazing, hunting and fishing. Fear was expressed that the inventory study was too rushed, and that roads and areas of less than 5,000 acres had been mistakenly included. One writer mentioned the overflight of military aircraft.

One letter was received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). It recommended wilderness designation.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. The County of Mono's Board of Supervisors supported wilderness designation for this area.

Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA.

4. Proposed Plan: There were almost no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle groups and conservation organizations maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Plan Alternatives, as did the Mono County Board of Supervisors.

Northwest Fishlake Valley

CDCA 102

NORTHWEST FISHLAKE VALLEY WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-102)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

14,818 acres

Northwest Fishlake Valley WSA is located in Mono County in the far northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest rural community is Big Pine, 25 miles southwest; the city of Bishop is 30 miles west. The WSA includes 14,737 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and 81 acres of private land. There are no split estate lands within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The study area's northeastern border follows the California-Nevada state line for approximately five miles and then follows Highway 266 south for four miles. Two cherrystemmed roads exist along the eastern border, one of which follows Furnace Creek for approximately three miles, almost bisecting the WSA. This cherrystem is used as access to the private parcel which is located in the center of the WSA. The second cherrystem road enters the WSA from Highway 266 and continues for approximately 3/4 mile until it ends at an active water pumping windmill. The southern boundary heads west from Highway 266, following a bladed dirt road next to Indian Garden Creek for four miles, until it meets the Inyo National Forest boundary. The WSA follows the Inyo National Forest boundary north along section lines for approximately ten miles, until it meets a bladed dirt road along Toler Creek. The boundary follows Toler Creek for one and one-half miles until it meets the Nevada-California border.

The WSA contains approximately 50% mountains within the White Mountain range, 20% alluvial fans, and 30% flat areas. Elevations range from 5,000 feet on the east side of the area up to 6,859 feet in the west. Steep valleys have been eroded out of the White Mountains which in turn created the alluvial plains on the eastern side of the WSA. The extreme east side of the WSA consists of flat areas on the Fish Lake Valley floor. The dominant plant communities are shadscale and sagebrush scrub in the lower elevations, with a scattering of Utah juniper-pinyon woodland in the higher elevations. Major wildlife within the area includes mule deer and chukar partridge. Riparian areas along Furnace Creek and Indian Garden Creek provide important wildlife habitat.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for the CDCA Plan, protection, use, balanced, and no action, and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ----

0 acres recommended for
wilderness
14,737 BLM acres recommended for
nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

While the WSA did meet the general criteria of wilderness as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, further studies during the preparation of the CDCA Plan determined that the area's values as wilderness did not exceed the potential for other uses. These are as follows: (1) the area has a moderate potential for uranium, thorium, silver, molybdenum, and rare earths; (2) scenic values are low; (3) with the release of the adjacent Forest Service (USFS) RARE II White Mountain Study Area, the wilderness values of the Northwest Fishlake Valley WSA do not stand alone; and (4) the WSA has marginal wilderness values.

The CDCA Plan rated the scenic values of the area as low for color, uniqueness, landform, and diversity. The mineral potential for the area attests to the area's value other than wilderness. The area has moderate potential for uranium in the extreme northern and extreme southern portions of the WSA. There is a moderate potential for molybdenum in the east-central portion of the area. A moderate potential for rare earths occurs west of the Furnace Creek Fault zone. A moderate potential for sand and gravel exists in the Furnace Creek area.

At the time of inventory, the WSA was adjacent to the Inyo National Forest White Mountains RARE II Study Area. Since that time, the study area has been dropped from wilderness consideration by the passage of the California Wilderness Act of 1984. Without the RARE II study area, the WSA loses most of its potential as a manageable wilderness area because of its size and linear shape.

The area lacks outstanding wilderness characteristics. The entire eastern portion of the WSA is flat and forms part of the Fish Lake Valley floor. Vegetation is scant and topographic screening is minimal. Man's impacts are very evident within this small area. Bladed ways were discovered after the inventory of the area. Windmills, a large borrow pit, and fences attest to man's actions within the area. Solitude is drastically affected by vehicular noise from State Highway 266, and the impacts of alfalfa farming immediately to the east of the WSA. There are approximately 10 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicle use.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	14,737
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		81
Total		<u>14,818</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	<u>0</u>
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	14,737
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>14,737</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The naturalness of the WSA has been seriously reduced by the works of man. Two cherrystemmed roads enter from the eastern border. One cherrystem is about three miles long and follows the Furnace Creek drainage. This cherrystem extends to within one-quarter mile of the western boundary. The other cherrystem road is about 3/4 mile long and follows an unnamed drainage to a windmill. Further inventory established that two bladed ways exist within the central and northern portion of the WSA. One way bisects the WSA and ends up in the Iron Creek drainage. The other way enters the WSA and goes to an active windmill and then continues on for a mile

and one-half to a borrow pit, which is about 200 feet long by 40 feet wide and approximately 30 feet deep. Two barbed wire fences extend into the WSA from the eastern boundary. The northern fence extends into the WSA for one mile. The second barbed wire fence and adjacent way extends for two miles into the southern portion of the WSA. All of the above impacts are highly visible. The remainder of the WSA is natural, especially along the Inyo National Forest boundary on the west side of the WSA.

2. Solitude: The western portion of the area offers opportunities for solitude because of its primitive character and its proximity to the White Mountains. Activity within the eastern portion of the WSA caused by recreationists, ranchers, and sightseers using the ways cause a loss of solitude to the area. State Highway 266 detracts from the solitude of the area due to the noise of vehicles using this highway as a major access from Fish Lake Valley to towns along the eastern Sierra Mountains. Alfalfa farming immediately adjacent to the WSA causes a loss of solitude due to machinery and movement within the fields during the preparation, daily irrigation, and harvesting of alfalfa.

This WSA is periodically overflown by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Within the western one-third of the WSA primitive and unconfined recreation can be found due to the lack of any permanent structures and the varied topography. The eastern two-thirds of the WSA is compromised by ways, fences, water windmills, a large borrow pit, and a cherrystemmed road which almost bisects the WSA. Farm machinery working the alfalfa fields immediately adjacent to the WSA on the east side, and vehicles using State Highway 266 which forms part of the eastern border of the WSA, also affect the quality of wilderness experience within the area. All of the above features reduce opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation experiences within the eastern part of the WSA.
4. Special Features: No special features were found within the WSA.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System
(NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 14,737 acres of the Intermountain Sagebrush/Great Basin Sagebrush ecosystem. The Northwest Fishlake Valley WSA would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	1	32,407	55	1,190,538
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	0	0	19	206,072

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of three major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of two BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is John Muir Wilderness Area in the Inyo National Forest, 45 air miles west of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Northwest Fishlake Valley WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, several items would significantly complicate manageability. Development of mineral deposits within the WSA would create

manageability problems and significantly degrade wilderness values. Without the adjacent USFS lands as wilderness, maintenance of wilderness values of the WSA cannot be assured due to its size and linear shape.

The existing ways and cherrystemmed roads provide easy vehicular access into the WSA. An intensive signing and monitoring program would be necessary to manage the area as wilderness.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

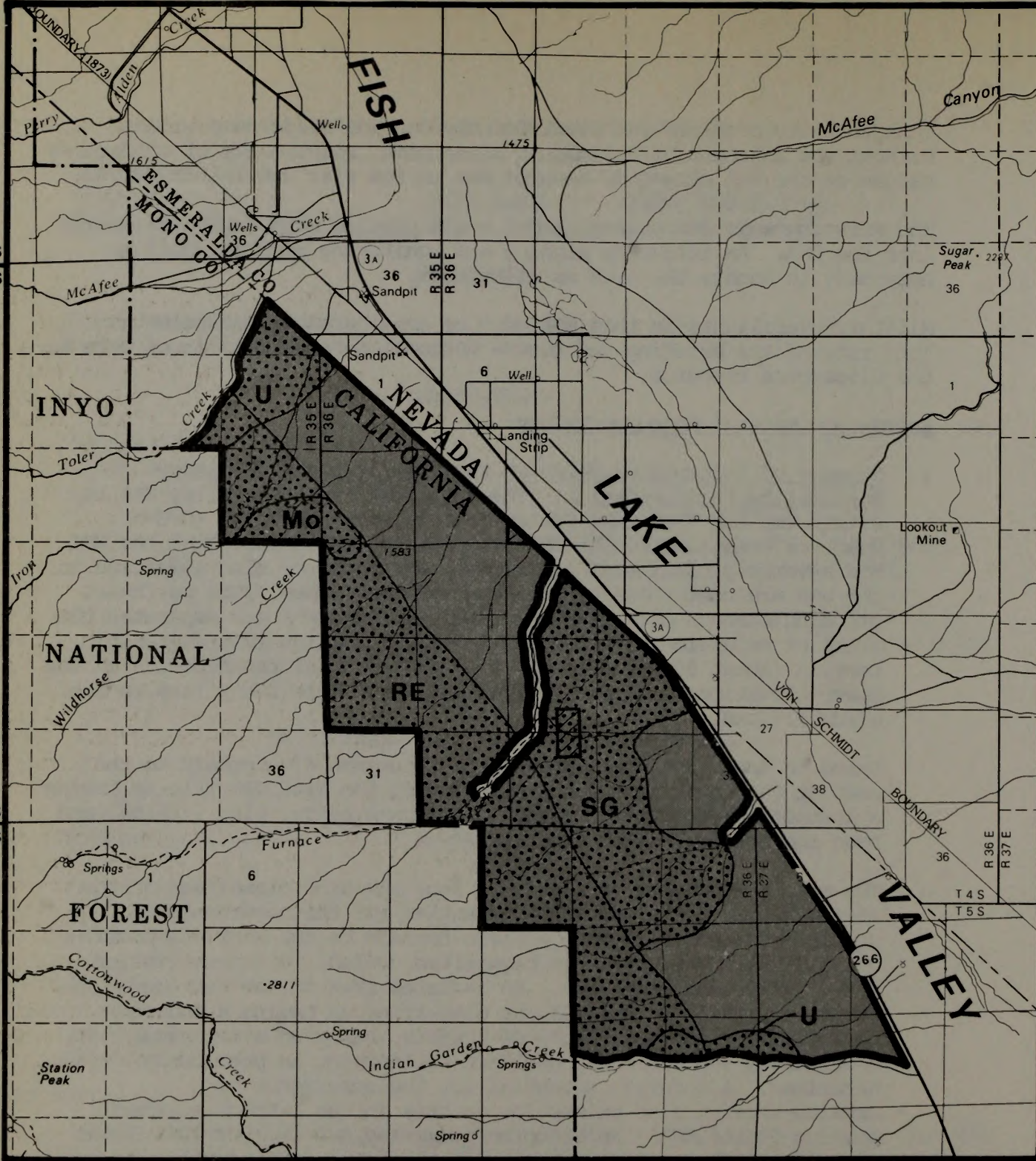
1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Northwest Fishlake Valley WSA is within the BLM Fish Lake Valley Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The GRA file in 1980 recognized that the WSA had a variety of mineral ore types. All types of mineralization in the WSA are controlled by faulting and rock types. The northwest trending Furnace Creek fault zone bisects the WSA and separates the areas of metallic and non-metallic mineralization in the granitic terrain (about 50% of the WSA) from the alluvial fan deposits in the lower elevations. Common mineral materials were identified on the alluvial fans.

Based on anomalous geochemical data, the granitic terrain to the west of the fault zone was classified in the 1980 GRA file as having a low potential for the occurrence of rare earth, tin, lithium, and base and precious metal deposits.

The area to the west of the fault zone was also classified in the 1980 GRA file as having a low potential for the occurrence of uranium and thorium. The granitic terrain to the west may host uranium-thorium minerals in pegmatites, veins, or mineralization along joints and fractures. An isolated area in the extreme northern portion of the WSA was classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium, based on a reported occurrence, and a similar geologic environment as previously described. A moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium-thorium also exists for an area in the extreme southern portion of the WSA. An airborne gamma-ray survey (BLM 1980 G-E-M assessment) detected an anomaly for thorium in the granitic terrain. Based on the anomaly, a favorable geologic environment, geochemical anomalies for associated rare earth mineralization, and number of unpatented mining claims, the WSA was classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium-thorium in this area. The workers analyzing the area in 1980 stopped short of classifying the area as having a high potential due to the absence of producers or direct occurrence.

T3S
T4S

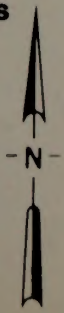
T4S
T5S



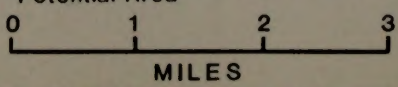
- NONE Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

- Explanation**
- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
 - Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
 - M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
 - H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

- Commodity Symbols**
- Mo** Molybdenum
 - U** Uranium
 - RE** Rare Earth
 - SG** Sand & Gravel



**N.W. Fish Lake Valley
Mineral Resource Potential**



The area of Quaternary sediments to the east of the Furnace Creek Fault Zone in the east-central portion of the WSA was classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of sand and gravel. The reworked and dissected sand and gravel in the older continental stream deposits may provide a source of quality road base for upkeep, maintenance, and expansion of the nearby State Highway 266.

Locatable non-metallic mineralization was not classified for this WSA due to insufficient data.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: There was no U.S. Geological Survey or Bureau of Mines mineral survey conducted in the WSA since it is recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation.

As of December, 1987 only one mill site location is on record with the BLM within the WSA.

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impacts on Wilderness Values: Noise, surface disturbance, and access requirements for mineral development, and motorized vehicle recreation, could result in moderate adverse impacts to wilderness values. Mineral development potential is concentrated in the north, south, and east-central portions of the WSA and any development would likely affect those areas.
2. Impacts on Locatable and Saleable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for exploration and development would continue to be available subject to applicable laws, regulations, and additional guidelines identified in the CDCA Plan.
3. Impacts on Motorized Recreation: Opportunities for motorized recreation on designated routes would continue to be available.
4. Impacts on Livestock Management: Opportunities would continue to be available for implementation of a wide spectrum of facilities to best manage livestock.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received.

1. Inventory Phase: The majority of the comments supported the findings.
2. Study Phase: Sixteen comments were received on this WSA. Eleven favored and four opposed wilderness designation; one was neutral. Those who favored a suitable recommendation mentioned the area's contiguity to U.S. Forest Service RARE II lands and its function as a buffer. Others mentioned the solitude and pristine quality of the area, its excellent scenic quality, and its superior opportunities for hiking and other primitive recreation. Two comments stated that the road between WSAs 102 and 103 did not qualify and that the two WSAs should be combined. It was also recommended that wilderness designation be coordinated with the State of Nevada in this area with a border common to both states, and that WSAs 100 through 107 should be combined into one study area.

The persons opposing a wilderness recommendation emphasized the existing signs of man's presence including improvements for livestock grazing, roads used by off-highway vehicle users, and overflights by military aircraft. They feared that hunting and fishing would be curtailed under wilderness management.

One comment was received in response to the Public Input workbook (3/15/79).

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rock hounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Mono County Board of Supervisors supported wilderness designation for this area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this WSA. Motorized vehicle and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Mono County Board of Supervisors.

White Mountain

CDCA 103

WHITE MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-103)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

8,775 acres

The White Mountain WSA is located in Inyo and Mono Counties in the far northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest rural communities are Big Pine approximately 25 miles to the southwest and Bishop, California, 30 miles to the west. There are no metropolitan areas within 100 miles. The WSA includes 8,766 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), nine acres of private land and no State lands (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The north boundary of the WSA is a road along Indian Garden Creek which starts at the Inyo National Forest border and continues east for four miles until it meets Highway 266. The boundary trends southeast along Highway 255 for two miles. Within this two mile boundary, there is a cherrystemmed bladed road which enters the WSA for three-quarters of a mile and terminates at an active water windmill. The eastern boundary then veers west for one and one-half miles and then south for another one and a half miles. Within this portion of the boundary is a cherrystemmed bladed road which enters the WSA for one mile and terminates at the Buck Mine. The eastern boundary meets the Cottonwood Creek Road and follows the road west for three and a half miles until it meets the Inyo National Forest border. The boundary follows the Inyo National Forest border north along section lines for three and one-half miles until it meets Indian Garden Creek Road.

The WSA contains approximately 75% mountainous terrain of the White Mountains, 20% alluvial fans which flow east into Fish Lake Valley, and 5% flat areas of the Fish Lake Valley floor. Elevations range from 5,200 feet on the east side of the area to 7,602 feet on the west side of the WSA. Steep valleys have eroded out of the White Mountains and formed alluvial fans which extend throughout the eastern side of the WSA. The dominant plant communities are shadscale and sage brush scrub in the lower elevations, and Utah juniper-pinyon pine woodland in the higher elevations. Major wildlife includes mule deer and chukar partridge which is hunted during specific times of the year. Riparian areas along the north in Cottonwood Creek and Indian Springs Garden Creek provide important habitat for wildlife.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan, protection, use, balanced, and no action, and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0	acres recommended for wilderness
8,766	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the White Mountain WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

While the WSA did meet the general criteria of wilderness as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, further studies during the preparation of the California Desert Plan determined that the area's values as wilderness did not exceed the potential for other uses for the following reasons: (1) without the adjacent previously proposed U.S. Forest Service (USFS) RARE II White Mountain Wilderness Area, the Wilderness Study Area can not stand alone as a wilderness area, (2) the mineral potential within the area is moderate for uranium, thorium, and as well as for sand and gravel resources and, (3) wilderness values within the WSA are mediocre.

Previously, the WSA was adjacent to the Inyo National Forest White Mountain RARE II Study Area along its western boundary. Since that time, the USFS RARE II Study has been dropped and the area has been suggested for further study by the Inyo National Forest. Within a small western portion of the WSA, the wilderness user could find wilderness qualities, but without the adjacent USFS wilderness the WSA can not stand alone as a wilderness area.

Mineral values within the WSA indicate that the area has more potential for mineral development than it does for wilderness values. Eighty to ninety percent of the WSA has moderate potential for uranium and thorium. The east-central portion of the study area in the vicinity of the Buck Mine has moderate potential for gold. A low potential for copper, molybdenum and tungsten exists in the southern portion of the WSA. A moderate potential for common mineral materials exist within the southeast portion of the area.

There are approximately five miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. Two cherrystemmed roads enter the area from the east side. One of the roads terminates at the Buck Mine which is located in the heart of the WSA. The other cherrystemmed road ends at an active water pumping windmill which is used by cattle permittees and recreationists. A way along the north boundary enters the WSA for approximately one mile and ends at a mining area and mine.

Solitude is drastically affected within the east portion of the WSA due to traffic noise along Highway 266 which is an access road to Owens Valley, California and Tonopah, Nevada. Machinery noise from alfalfa preparation,

irrigation, and harvesting occurs immediately adjacent to the WSA on the east side of the area. The Oasis Ranch headquarters, ranch houses and barns are adjacent to the WSA. All of the above activities cause a loss of solitude within the eastern portion of the WSA.

Two known areas of cultural resource sensitivity are located within the WSA. The area is continually used by the Bishop-Big Pine Indians as a pinyon nut collection area which will not be affected by non designation.

The WSA includes 50% of the Oasis Ranch Grazing Allotment, which is a grandfathered activity. The WSA is also included in the Piper Mountain Herd Management Area for the management of wild horses and burros. Neither of these above aspects will be affected by the proposed action.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	8,766
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		9
Total		<u>8,775</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	<u>0</u>
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	8,766
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>8,766</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The majority of the land area within the WSA has been affected primarily by natural forces. The WSA retains its primeval characteristics and has been largely unaffected by man's activities. A way branches off the Buck Mine road and extends into the WSA for approximately two miles. An additional way starts at the north border and extends one mile into the WSA to a mining area.
2. Solitude: The study area offers opportunities for solitude within the western portion of the area because of its primeval character. The non-designation as wilderness of the adjacent USFS RARE II Area

limits the amount of solitude to the actual acreage of BLM administered land. The eastern one-third has less opportunity for solitude due to the openness of the terrain. Noise from Highway 266 permeates the eastern portion of WSA. Alfalfa farming takes place immediately adjacent to the WSA on the eastern side. Preparation, daily irrigations, and harvesting of the alfalfa causes a loss of solitude due to the noise created by machinery operation. The Oasis Ranch headquarters, ranch house, out buildings and barns are adjacent to the WSA and cause a loss of solitude due to the noise created by active ranching operations.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation exist within the western two-thirds of the WSA. Non-designation of the adjacent USFS RARE II Area on the western boundary leaves the WSA with less opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation which limit wilderness recreation to the BLM acres within the WSA. A way which branches off the cherrystem to the Buck Mine enters the WSA. Another way enters the WSA from the north boundary for one mile and ends at a mine. These two roads affect opportunities for primitive recreation opportunities.
4. Special Features: Two known areas of cultural resource sensitivity are located within the WSA. This WSA is in a region which has been traditionally used by the Fishlake area Paiute Indians for pinyon nut collecting. The Bishop-Big Pine area Indian elders have indicated that the area continues to be employed for this purpose by reservation residents from the Owens Valley.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System
(NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 8,766 acres of the Intermountain Sagebrush/Great Basin Sagebrush ecosystem. Designation would not add diversity or any natural features or systems to the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	1	32,407	55	1,196,509
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	0	0	19	212,043

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five hour drive of three major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study area within a five hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of three BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is John Muir Wilderness Area in the Inyo National Forest, 45 air miles west of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The area is manageable as wilderness but only in conjunction with the formerly proposed USFS White Mountain RARE II Wilderness Study Area proposal which was dropped from consideration.

Management of the area around the cherrystemmed roads could prove to be difficult. Two cherrystemmed roads enter the WSA from the east side of the WSA. These roads are used for mining access to the Buck Mine and recreation and grazing permittee access to an active water pumping windmill and the interior of the WSA. The active ways are used as access to mining areas.

The mineral potential could have an affect on the management of the area if mineral exploration and development were to take place within the WSA. A total of 63 unpatented mining claims totaling 1,380 acres are recorded within the WSA as of December 1987. Uranium and thorium values have been found in 80% of the WSA. There is a moderate potential for gold at the Buck Mine. The southern portion of the area has potential for copper. If any of these areas are found to have valid existing rights, management of the WSA would be compromised by mining exploration and development.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The White Mountain WSA is located in the BLM Fish Lake Valley Geology-Energy-Minerals (G.E.M.) Resource Area (GRA). BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the CDCA plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980, was not sufficient to fully evaluate mineral potential for most locatable mineral resources. However, BLM GRA file data incorporated into the EIS did indicate a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium, thorium, sand, gravel and gold in the WSA. Twenty-six unpatented mining claims located in the WSA were recorded with the BLM on December 12, 1979.

Common mineral materials, such as sand and gravel, were noted in the GRA in the alluvial deposits along the eastern 20% of the WSA. Past production of sand and gravel has occurred to the southeast of the WSA boundary, and the geologic formation containing the deposit extends northward into the WSA. The existence of a past producer and associated favorable geologic environment places a moderate potential for the occurrence of salable materials in this area. Although not specifically classified by the 1980 GRA file data, the BLM GRA report states that the WSA is underlain by materials potentially suitable for crushed and broken rock commonly used as construction material.

Data from the 1980 BLM GRA file does not adequately assess the potential for locatable minerals in the western and upland portions of the WSA. Geochemical sampling data for the 1980 BLM GRA study was not available for the western part of the WSA. However, a re-examination of the linament study for the BLM GRA report shows an area on the extreme southwestern portion of the WSA to be the focal point of three well defined fracture zones. This indicates a

geologic environment similar to that of the nearby Copper Queen (Oasis) Mine which occurs in this fracture zone. O.P. Jenkins, in Copper in California, (California Division of Mines and Geology Bulletin No. 144, 1948), describes the geology and mineralization of the Copper Queen as a copper replacement type deposit (skarn) and states that production occurred at the mine (figures not reported). Based on the BLM classification scheme, the southern portion of the WSA is classified as having a low potential for the occurrence skarn type deposits, consisting of copper, molybdenum, and tungsten.

A review of BLM mining claim records indicated that the WSA contains 63 unpatented mining claims, or three times the number located in 1979. The claims are located primarily in the east central part of the WSA near the Buck Mine.

The 1980 BLM GRA file data supports the EIS statement of a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium in the west central portion of the WSA. The BLM GRA file data also supports a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold in the east central portion of the WSA and sand and gravel in the eastern one-third of the WSA. The 1980 GRA file indicated that 80% to 90% of the WSA has a moderate potential classification for the occurrence of uranium based on airborne gamma ray anomaly for uranium and thorium, and geochemical anomalies for associated rare earth mineralization. The BLM GRA report in 1980, documents an isolated occurrence of gold near the Buck Mine in the central area of the WSA. The reported occurrence of gold and a geologic environment favorable to localized, high grade deposits, supported a moderate potential classification for the occurrence of gold in the Central portion of the WSA.

The WSA was not classified for the occurrence of locatable nonmetallic minerals in the BLM GRA data file and report due to the lack of sufficient evidence.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) Mineral Surveys been conducted in the WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The California Division of Mines and Geology has completed a Mineral Land Classification for the WSA.

No mining or exploration activity has been approved by the BLM in the WSA, but interest remains high as indicated by the following BLM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE MINING CLAIM	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	N/A	57	57	N/A	1,140	1,140
Placer	N/A	6	6	N/A	240	240
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	63	63	N/A	1,380	1,380

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impacts on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values will suffer adverse impacts due to potential mineral exploration and development within specific areas within the WSA as described in this document.
2. Impacts on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for exploration and development will continue to be available within the area subject to regulations stated in 43 CFR 3809 regarding surface disturbance, as well as any additional constraints specified within the CDCA Plan.
3. Impacts on Motorized Recreation: Opportunities for motorized recreation on designated routes will continue to be available within the area.
4. Impacts on Cultural Resources: All proposed surface disturbing activities will be subjected to environmental analysis to allow the detection and salvage of any affected resources.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS, no further discussion of it will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: The majority of comments received supported the findings.

2. Study Phase: Nine of the fourteen comments received about WSA 103 favored wilderness designation; five opposed it. Reasons for approval were the contiguity of the WSA to USFS RARE II lands to the west and the qualities of the area which fulfill the criteria of Section 2(c); i.e., natural condition and opportunities for solitude and primitive forms of recreation. One person recommended that WSAs CDCA-100 through CDCA-107 should be considered as units with the USFS RARE II lands which adjoin them. Another stated that the road between WSAs CDCA-102 and CDCA-103 did not meet the qualifications for a road and that the WSAs should be combined.

The persons opposing a wilderness recommendation noted that existing signs of human presence, including improvements for livestock grazing, roads used by off-highway vehicle users, and overflights by military aircraft. They feared that hunting and fishing would be curtailed under wilderness management.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the draft alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition of mining, rock hounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Mono County Board of Supervisors supported wilderness designation for this area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same position stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Mono County Board of Supervisors.

Cottonwood Creek

CDCA 104

COTTONWOOD CREEK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-104)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

6,481 acres

The Cottonwood Creek WSA is located in Inyo County in the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). Bishop, located 25 miles southwest, is the closest community. The WSA is composed of 6,466 acres of public land, under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and 15 acres of private land (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The WSA's northern boundary follows Cottonwood Creek and Cottonwood Creek Road. The eastern boundary parallels State Route 168. One area, the Copper Queen Mine, located along this eastern boundary, has been excluded from the WSA. To the south, the boundary is delineated by an access road to the White Mountain City ruins. The western boundary is formed by the Inyo National Forest (USFS).

This WSA includes a portion of the lower foothills of the White Mountains east slope. The terrain is varied with abundant canyons. The foothills appear rounded, dotted with unique rock formations. The vegetation sequence begins with a low mixed sagebrush scrub community, and proceeds up to a sparse pinyon pine/juniper forest at the higher elevations. Within this WSA, elevations range from 7,600 feet in the foothills to 5,200 feet on the northeastern bajada.

The WSA was included for further consideration during the planning process only because it adjoined a USFS RARE II area in the Inyo National Forest that was being evaluated for potential wilderness designation.

The WSA was studied under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan, use, protection, balanced, and no action, and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0 acres recommended for
wilderness

6,466 BLM acres recommended for
nonwilderness

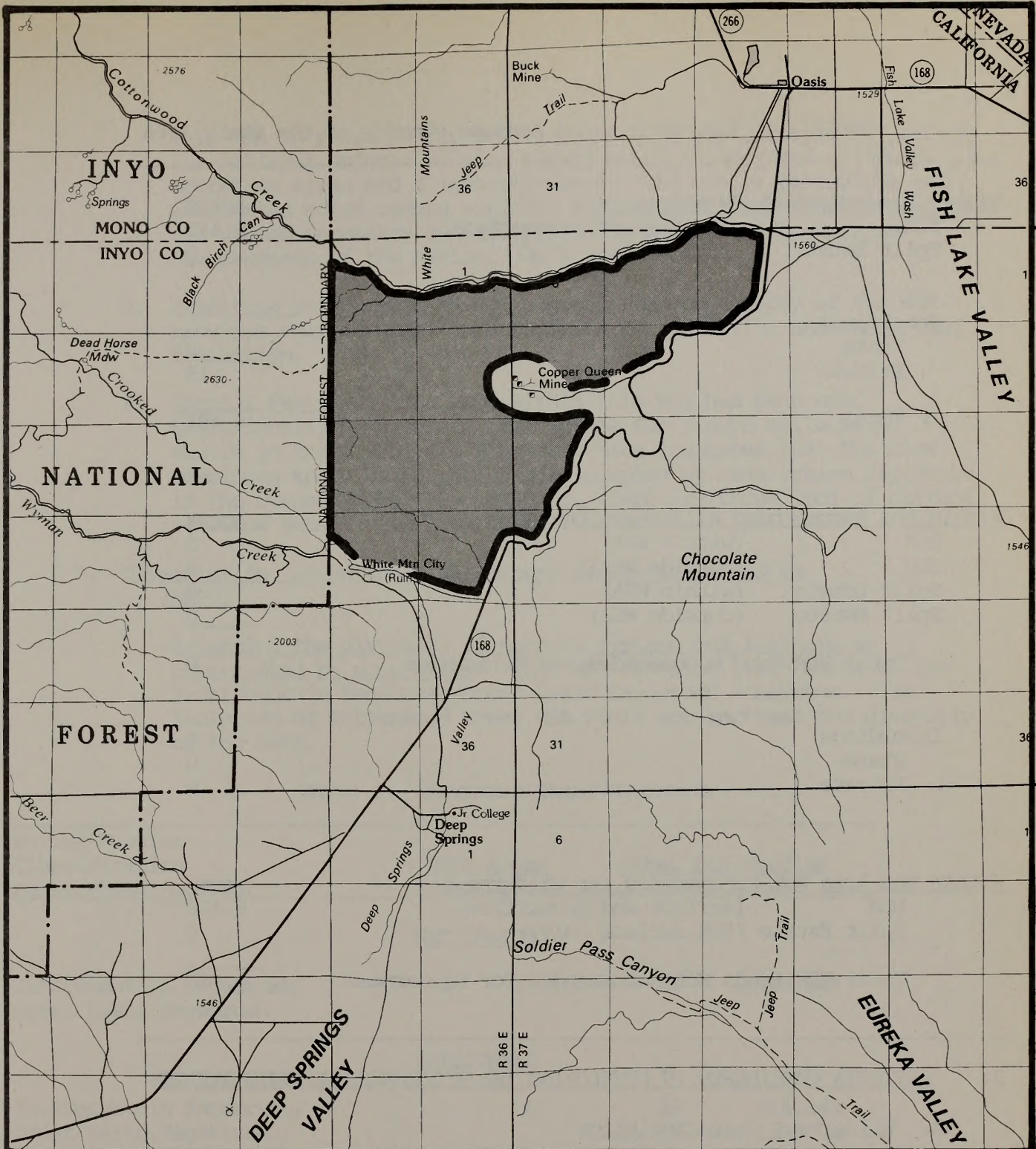
No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

When the WSA was included in the study process, it was contiguous to a USFS RARE II study area in the Inyo National Forest. Since then, the USFS has released this area from wilderness consideration. Consequently, the Cottonwood Creek WSA must be considered on its own merits.

The area possesses only marginal wilderness values. Naturalness has been lessened by past mining activities, and opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined types of recreation are available, but they are not outstanding. When measured against the mineral resource values, these wilderness values fall far short. Roughly 90% of this WSA has been classified as having moderate potential for the occurrence of a variety of minerals, including gold, silver, lead, copper, tungsten, and sand and gravel. Over twenty percent of the WSA is encumbered by mining claims. As of December, 1987, 57 claims had been filed on public land within the study area. Approximately 2.5 miles of primitive routes of travel have been identified within the WSA.

The grandfathered Deep Canyon Grazing Allotment covers this WSA. This allotment covers 44,062 acres and supports a total of 1,018 Animal Unit Months (AUM). This allotment is grazed perennially by cattle.



NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



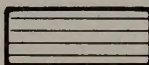
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



SPLIT ESTATE

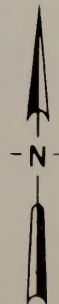
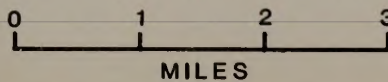


STATE



PRIVATE

**Cottonwood Creek
Proposal
MAP-1**



CDCA-104
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	6,466
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		15
Total		<u>6,481</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	<u>0</u>
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	6,466
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>6,466</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: This area has retained its primitive character and generally appears to have been affected primarily by natural forces. A few primitive ways penetrate the area, and signs of previous mining activity are evident.
2. Solitude: Within the WSA's boundaries, opportunities for solitude are available, though limited. Topographic variation and vegetation provide some measure of screening. The outside sights and sounds of vehicles on the nearby highway decrease the opportunities for solitude.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The topography of the WSA provides only marginal opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.
4. Special Features: The area within this WSA has been used traditionally by Fishlake area Paiute for pinyon collection. Tribal elders in the Bishop-Big Pine area have indicated that the area continues to be utilized for this purpose by reservation residents in the Owens Valley. In addition, there are three loci of cultural resource sensitivity located in this area.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 6,466 acres of the Intermountain Sagebrush/Great Basin Sagebrush ecosystem. The inclusion of Cottonwood Creek WSA would not increase the diversity of the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	1	32,047	55	1,198,809
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Great Basin Sagebrush	0	0	19	214,343

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of three major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of five BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is John Muir Wilderness area, located 35 miles west in the Inyo National Forest. Wilderness Areas in the Sequoia Kings Canyon National Park are also located within a 50 mile radius.

C. Manageability

The Cottonwood Creek WSA is manageable as wilderness, however, only with extreme difficulty. There are several issues that arise as a function of the area's size: the impact of outside sights and sounds, the area's limited capacity to accommodate wilderness visitors, and the impacts of numerous mining claims.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Cottonwood Creek WSA is located in the BLM Fishlake Valley Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M narrative in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) stated that the WSA has potential for lead, copper, molybdenum, zinc, tungsten, rare earths, uranium, thorium, sand, gravel, and pumice. As of December 12, 1979, there were no unpatented mining claims located in the WSA on record with the BLM.

The 1980 BLM GRA report and file data support the G-E-M statement in the 1980 CDCA EIS. The 1980 BLM GRA report classified the area surrounding the Copper Queen Mine as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of copper and tungsten based on favorable geology and field verification of reported occurrences. The southern two-

thirds of the WSA was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a low potential for the occurrence of base metals and silver based on geochemical anomalies of associated minerals and a favorable geologic environment. The entire WSA was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a low potential for the occurrence of uranium and thorium based on documented gamma-ray anomalies in similar rock types to the north and south of the WSA and a slight geochemical anomaly for associated rare earth minerals in the extreme southern portion of the WSA.

The area surrounding the White Mountain City ruins was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of sand, gravel and pumice. The 1980 BLM GRA file estimated the value of the sand and gravel deposit at \$30,000.00 (1979 dollars). The 1980 BLM GRA report did not classify the WSA for sodium, potassium, oil, gas, and geothermal resources due to lack of sufficient data.

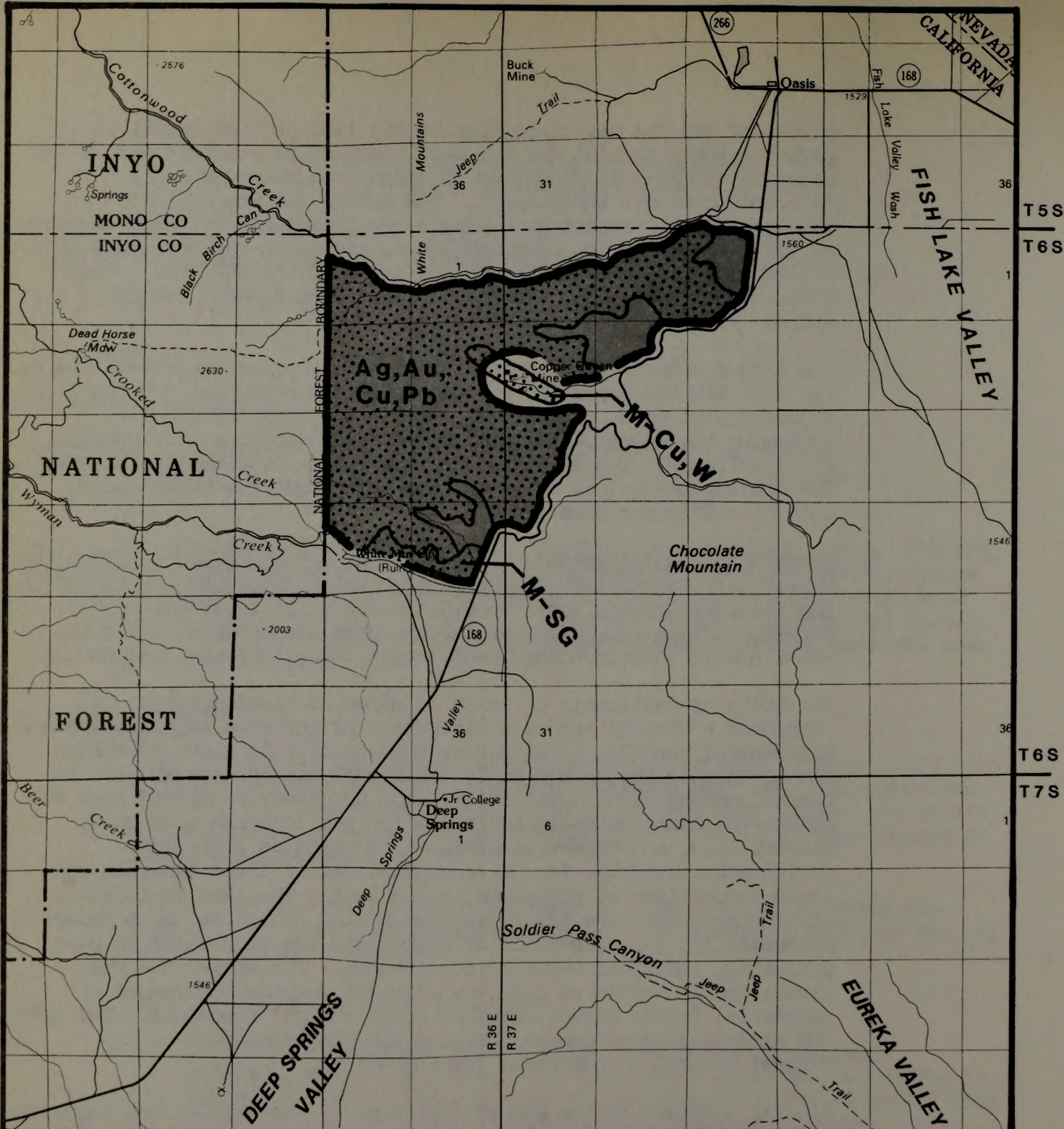
2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral surveys have been completed for the WSA since it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The State of California Division of Mines and Geology (DMG) has completed a Mineral Land Classification of the area encompassing and surrounding the WSA. Preliminary results of this study have been made available to the Bureau for this analysis and are subject to change pending final publication. The DMG study concluded that 80% of the WSA has a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, lead, and copper mineralization based on a geologic environment favorable for the accumulations of these minerals and field inspections of prospects in the area. The area surrounding the Copper Queen Mine was classified by the DMG as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of copper and tungsten based on past production and field verified occurrences. The entire WSA was classified as having an unknown potential for the occurrence of industrial (sand, gravel, crushed rock) mineral resources. The 1988 DMG mineral study supports the 1980 BLM GRA assessment of the mineral occurrence potential for the WSA.

Mineral interest in the WSA is indicated by the significant increase of mining claims recorded with the BLM since 1980. The following table summarizes the BLM mining claim records as of December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	N/A	53	53	N/A	1,060	1,060
Placer	N/A	4	4	N/A	160	160
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Totals	N/A	57	57	N/A	1,220	1,220



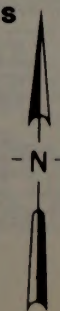
NONE	Recommended for Wilderness
	Recommended for Non Wilderness
	Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
	Split Estate
	State
	Private

Explanation

	High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
	Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
M	Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
H	High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

Ag	Silver
Au	Gold
Cu	Copper
Pb	Lead
SG	Sand & Gravel
W	Tungsten



**Cottonwood Creek
Mineral Resource Potential**

0 1 2 3
MILES

**MAP-2
CDCA-104**

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Mineral development could cause localized adverse impacts to naturalness. Mineral development could create direct adverse impacts to solitude and primitive recreation throughout most of the WSA. Range improvements placed in this WSA could affect naturalness locally.
2. Impact on Native American Collecting Activities: This activity would not be impacted by the proposed action. Existing access to collection areas would remain open to vehicles.
3. Impact on Grazing: This activity would be allowed to continue. Opportunities for the development of new range improvements would be available.
4. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities would continue to be available for development of mineral resources subject to applicable laws, regulations and the low intensity management guidelines established in the CDCA Plan.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments received supported the findings.
2. Study Phase: Wilderness designation was favored by 75 percent of the twenty comments received on this WSA. Superior opportunities for hiking, camping, backpacking, and other types of primitive recreation were mentioned. Geographic features, such as lava flows (none located within this WSA), historic mining sites, and petroglyphs were said to complement the scenic and educational values of the area. Students and members of the staff of Deep Springs College expressed a great appreciation for the "wilderness" condition of the land surrounding the campus. They also recommended wilderness as a buffer to adjacent USFS RARE II lands.

The comments opposing wilderness designation indicated a fear that rockhounding and hunting would no longer be feasible recreational activities if wilderness were implemented. Mining interests saw wilderness as a threat to "essential economic growth." Others

thought that lights and noise from nearby settlements would affect night time solitude. Some who commented discussed the inventory program, saying it ignored roads and included areas of less than 5,000 acres.

Two letters received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79) favored wilderness because this area is easily accessible and because it is used by Deep Springs College as part of the campus and would benefit its program.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for this area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Wyman Creek

CDCA 105

WYMAN CREEK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-105)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

7,749 acres

The Wyman Creek WSA is located in Inyo County in the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest rural town is Big Pine, 25 miles to the southwest. The city of Bishop is 30 miles to the northwest. The WSA includes 7,292 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and 457 acres of private land. There are no split estate or State lands within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern boundary follows Wyman Creek Road and a maintained dirt road two miles east to the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) Deep Springs Maintenance Station. The boundary follows State Highway 168 southwest and then veers west along a maintained dirt road. Along this section of the western boundary are two cherrystemmed roads. From the second cherrystem the boundary trends south and again intersects State Highway 168. The boundary follows State Highway 168 south and west for approximately four miles to the intersection of a bladed dirt road which continues north to the Inyo National Forest (USFS) border. The boundary follows the Inyo National Forest border northeast along section lines until it meets the northern boundary of the WSA at Wyman Creek.

The WSA contains approximately 35% mountains, 35% dissected alluvial fans, and 30% of the floor of Fish Lake Valley. The topography consists of alluvial plains which trend east towards the Deep Springs Valley floor from the foothills of the White Mountains. Elevations range from 5,200 feet on the east side of the area to 6,572 feet on the west side of the WSA. Small ridges and rounded hills have eroded out of the White Mountains to form most of the topography on the western side of the WSA. The dominant plant communities are shadscale and sagebrush scrub.

The White Mountain City Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is located along the northern boundary of the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan; protection, use, balanced, and no action, and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0 acres recommended for
wilderness
7,292 BLM acres recommended for
nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

While the WSA did meet the general criteria of wilderness as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, further studies determined that the area's value as wilderness did not exceed the potential for other uses. The WSA is not recommended suitable for wilderness designation due to the following reasons: (1) without the adjacent previously proposed Forest Service (USFS) RARE II White Mountain Wilderness Area, the WSA cannot stand alone as a wilderness area; (2) the area has a moderate potential for minerals; and (3) wilderness values are only moderate and naturalness has been significantly affected by the works of man.

Originally the WSA adjoined the USFS White Mountain RARE II Study area. The RARE II area was dropped from consideration and the White Mountain area was placed into a classification by the USFS for further study. Without the inclusion of the USFS White Mountain RARE II Study Area into the National Wilderness Preservation System, the WSA cannot stand alone as a wilderness area due to both its size and configuration.

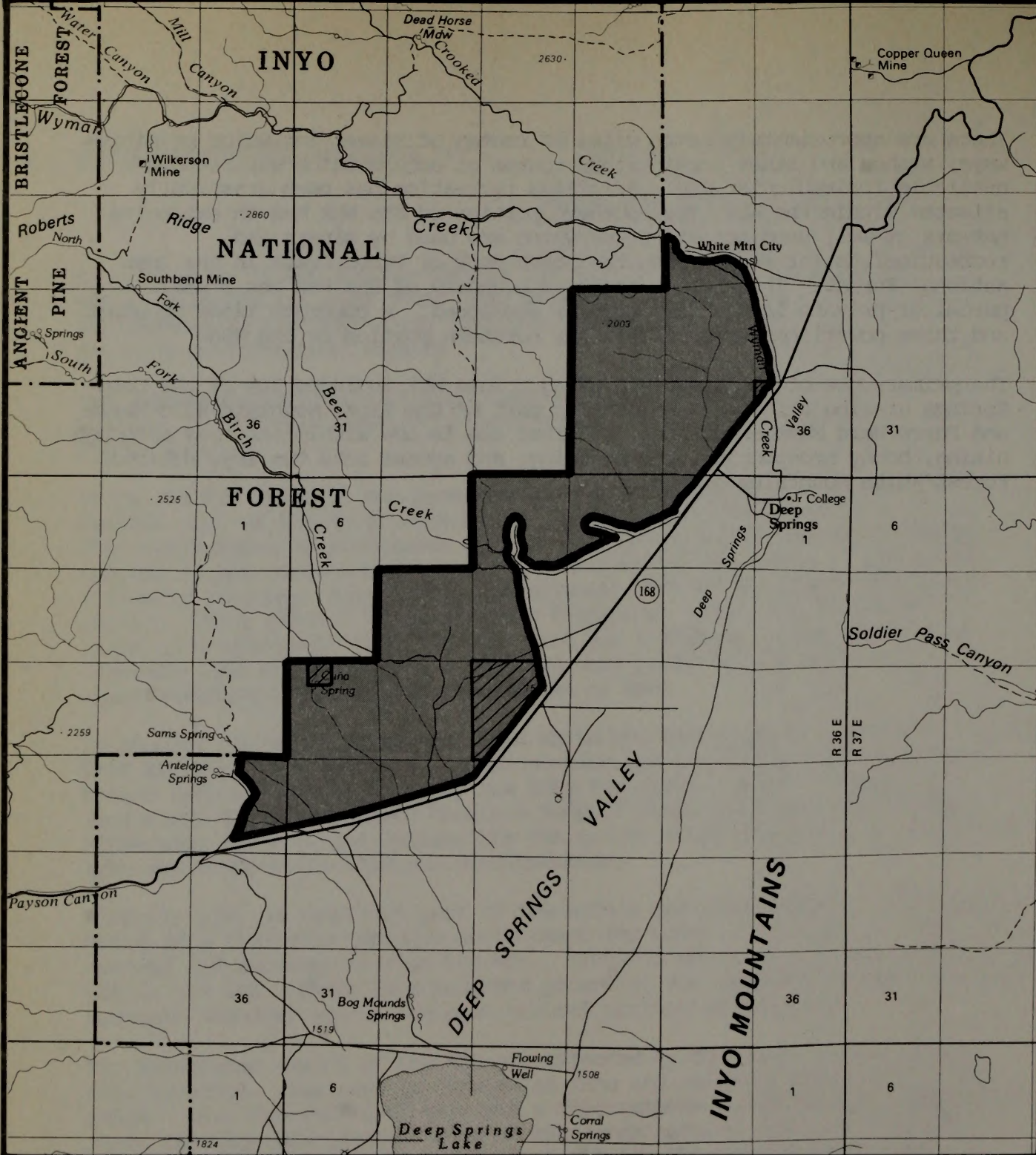
Minerals play an important part of the area's recommendation as nonsuitable. There is a favorable geologic environment for metallic minerals in the central and southern half of the WSA. Tungsten shows as a moderate potential within the WSA. There is a moderate potential for sand and gravel near the northern boundary and in the east central portion of the area.

The wilderness values of the WSA are affected by the study area's narrow configuration. The area is nine miles long and one-half mile wide at one point. Near the middle of this WSA a cherrystemmed road almost bisects the area, leaving only one-half mile of WSA lands between the cherrystem and the western boundary. At this point, just outside the WSA boundary, are two asphalt mixing circles used by CalTrans and Inyo County Road Department for mixing road material for State Highway 168 and other roads within the area.

Solitude is drastically affected by the noise along State Highway 168. Noise created by the Deep Springs CalTrans Maintenance Station and activities associated with asphalt mixing circles along the northern border and central border, respectively, of the area permeate the WSA. Asphalt mixing vehicles are also located along the northern border of the WSA. The only place outstanding solitude can be found is within the extreme western portion of the area next to the Inyo National Forest boundary.

There are approximately seven miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. Primitive recreation has been drastically affected within the WSA. The southern portion of the WSA has an extensive network of well used access routes which are used by miners and recreationists for access into the North Fork of Birch Creek in the Inyo National Forest. The extreme southern boundary of the WSA has a small parcel of private land which could be developed. A concrete lined aqueduct and three powerlines exist within the northern portion of the WSA.

The primary use of the area is grazing. This WSA includes 20% of the Deep Springs grazing allotment and is also part of the Piper Mountain Wild Horse and Burro Herd Management Area. Visitor use is low within the area although hiking, hobby prospecting, rockhounding, and access into the Inyo National Forest White Mountains occurs.



T6S

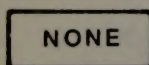
T7S

T7S

T8S

R35E R36E

R36E R37E



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



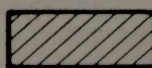
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



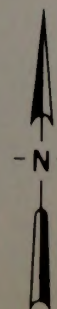
SPLIT ESTATE



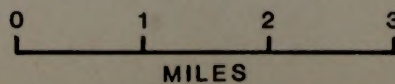
STATE



PRIVATE



**Wyman Creek
Proposal
MAP-1**



CDCA-105
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	7,292
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		457
Total		<u>7,749</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	<u>0</u>
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	7,292
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>7,292</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The western portion of the area retains its primeval character because of its proximity to the White Mountains. The southern portion of the WSA has an extensive network of ways which are used by miners and recreationists for access into the north fork of Birch Creek in the Inyo National Forest. The extreme southern boundary of the WSA has small parcels of private land which have not been developed. A parcel of State land lies on the joint border of the Inyo National Forest and the WSA boundary. In the extreme northern portion of the WSA is a concrete lined aqueduct. This aqueduct is currently being transformed into a pipeline system which

will carry water to a mini-hydro project located outside of the WSA. Three electric powerlines cross the extreme northern portion of the WSA. One crosses behind the CalTrans Deep Springs Maintenance Station, the other two traverse in and out of the northern boundary of the WSA.

2. Solitude: Solitude exists within the western portion of the area because it abuts the White Mountains. As the wilderness user moves away from the foothills of the White Mountains into the floor of the Deep Springs Valley, the solitude diminishes. Noise emanating from the CalTrans Deep Springs Maintenance Station along the northeast border of the WSA causes disturbance to solitude. Adjacent to the northern border and western borders are asphalt mixing circles used on a continual basis to mix asphalt for the highways within the area. The noise of heavy equipment permeates the northern portion of the area when the machinery is in use. Noise from trucks and cars on State Highway 168 penetrates the entire eastern portion of the WSA. This highway is the main route from Fish Lake Valley and other Nevada communities to the towns along the east side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the Owens Valley area. General motor vehicle use within the WSA detracts from the solitude, especially where access to the White Mountains is gained by the drainage of the north fork of Birch Creek, for mining, hunting, and recreation.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Primitive and unconfined recreation can be found within the western portion of the WSA adjacent to the White Mountains. As the recreationist moves away from the foothills of the mountains into the Deep Springs Valley floor, aspects of primitive and unconfined recreation are reduced. The narrow shape of this one-half to two mile wide by nine mile long WSA detracts from the primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities. Approximately seven miles of active ways exist within the WSA. This network of ways exist within the south-central portion of the area which is used by recreationists, miners, and sightseers as access to Birch Creek in the Inyo National Forest White Mountains. One way leads to a mining area and adit within the WSA. Two cherrystemmed roads enter the middle portion of the WSA, one road almost bisects the area and ends at a mine shaft and adit, this road comes within one-half mile of the western boundary. Two barbed wire fences also bisect the area within the middle portion of the WSA. Within the northern portion of the WSA, a concrete lined aqueduct and three powerlines lie within the WSA. All of these intrusions detract from the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

4. Special Features: The Deep Spring area is popular among rockhounds as a good source of crystals and other specimens of interest to the collector.

Approximately four square miles are utilized as a foraging area for a prairie falcon eyre located outside of the WSA. The presence of water along the northern boundary attracts birds to the area which makes the vicinity excellent for bird watching.

One area of cultural resource sensitivity is located within the WSA. White Mountain City on the extreme northern border of the WSA has been designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for its historic and prehistoric cultural resource values.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 7,292 acres of the American Desert/Juniper-pinyon woodland ecosystem. It would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u> areas acres		<u>Other BIM Studies</u> areas acres	
	<u>NATIONWIDE</u>			
American Desert/Juniper- Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	24	699,819
	<u>CALIFORNIA</u>			
American Desert/Juniper- Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	16	478,568

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of three major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BIM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of three BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is the John Muir Wilderness Area, in the Inyo National Forest, 45 air miles west of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Wyman Creek WSA is manageable as wilderness, although it would be difficult. One of the difficulties is due to the WSA's size and narrow shape. Solitude would be difficult to maintain because of the effects of outside sights and sounds. In addition, the WSA contains areas of moderate mineral potential with 39 existing mining claims. If any claims prove valid, development would make maintenance of wilderness values in this small, narrow WSA virtually impossible.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The WSA is located in the BLM Fish Lake Valley Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the CDCA plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 indicated that the WSA has a potential for copper, molybdenum, tungsten, lithium, silver, lead, zinc, uranium, thorium, sand and gravel, and crushed rock. Seven unpatented mining claims were known to be recorded with the BLM on December 12, 1979.

The BLM GRA file data in 1980 supports the EIS by indicating that the WSA had a moderate potential for the occurrence of metallic minerals in the central portion of the WSA, and a favorable geologic environment for the occurrence of metallic minerals in the southern

half and northeast quarter of the WSA. This moderate potential centers on known occurrences of tungsten and several unpatented mining claims. GRA file data indicates that the remainder of the WSA, except for a narrow area parallel to State Highway 168 in the east central portion of the WSA, could not be classified for metallic minerals due to insufficient data, but that potentially favorable geology may be present. Map 2 reflects the mineral resource potential of the WSA.

A combination of multiple intrusions of Jurassic monzonite in the WSA, their emplacement into and adjacent to Precambrian and Cambrian sedimentary rocks, and anomalous rare earth, tin, lithium, and base metal geochemical values explain the GRA file classification for locatable metallic minerals.

The GRA file indicated that insufficient data was available for classifying the WSA for nonmetallic mineral resources, but the northern two-thirds of the WSA contains a favorable geologic environment for the occurrence of uranium and or thorium. Data were insufficient to classify the southern two-thirds of the WSA, except that potentially favorable geology for uranium and thorium minerals may be present. This does not support the EIS statement that the northern three-quarters of the WSA has a moderate potential for the occurrence of these minerals.

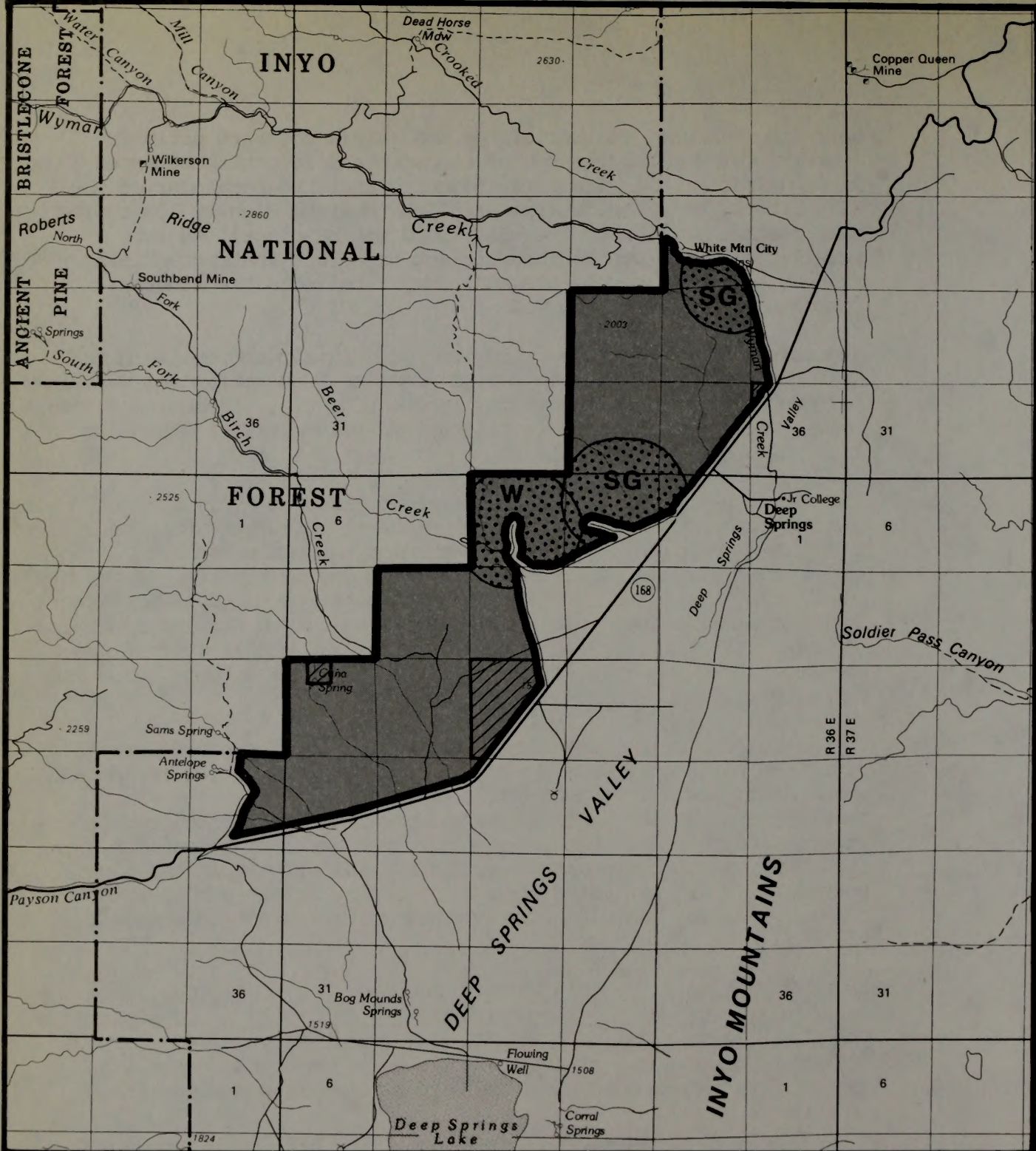
Two sites of moderate potential for occurrence of sand and gravel along the northern boundary and the east central portion of the WSA were identified in the 1980 GRA. The record indicates that both sites had previous production, but the record does not give production figures or dates of production. The 1980 GRA report does support the EIS by indicating that the east central site was estimated to have a royalty value to the United States of about \$250,000. The northern site was not addressed in the EIS.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral surveys were conducted in the WSA since it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

Interest in mineral exploration is indicated by the following BLM mining claim records dated December 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	26	26	N/A	520	520
Placer	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mill Site	N/A	13	13	N/A	65	65
Total	N/A	39	39	N/A	585	585



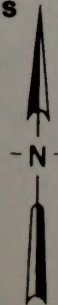
- NONE** Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness**
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness**
- Split Estate**
- State**
- Private**

Explanation

- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals**
- Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals**
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- W** Tungsten
- SG** Sand & Gravel



**Wyman Creek
Mineral Resource Potential**

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-105

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impacts on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values will suffer adverse impacts due to continued off-highway vehicle (OHV) use and potential mineral exploration and development within specific areas of the WSA as described in this document.
2. Impacts on Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for exploration and development will continue to be available within the area, subject to applicable regulations and guidelines established in the CDCA Plan.
3. Impacts on Motorized Recreation: Opportunities for motorized recreation on designated routes will continue to be available within the area.
4. Impacts on White Mountain City ACEC: The ACEC will continue to be managed according to the guidelines presented in the CDCA Plan. All proposed activities will be subjected to environmental analysis to identify potential impacts to the resources within the ACEC, and develop appropriate mitigation measures.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments on WSAs CDCA-105 through CDCA-107 contested road designations on early maps. Further field checks led to combination of these areas into one WSA to make a larger roadless area.
2. Study Phase: Sixteen of the twenty comments received for this WSA recommended wilderness designation. Reasons given were the following: (1) contiguity to USFS RARE II lands and the need to protect those lands; (2) outstanding scenic values and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation; (3) the presence of riparian areas which support animal life; (4) desire of students and staff of Deep Springs College to maintain the wilderness qualities of lands adjacent to the campus; (5) presence of outstanding petroglyphs and the ruins of White Mountain City, as well as special flora, including 12 foot tall sagebrush. The State of California Resources Agency urged that WSAs 100 through 107, all

adjacent to USFS RARE II lands, should be considered as one unit. Opponents to wilderness designation mentioned: (1) insufficient acreage to meet Section 2(c) requirements; (2) low level overflights by military aircraft; (3) evidence of off-highway vehicle use on existing vehicle routes; and (4) the presence of ruins of White Mountain City. A lapidary society wanted the area left open to a Deep Springs crystal location which they said was heavily used by collectors.

Letters received in response to the Public Input workbooks (3/15/79) were in favor of this area as wilderness because it dramatically displays desert mountains and it is used by students of Deep Spring College for quiet study and meditation.

3. Draft Plan Alternative: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for the area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Antelope Spring

CDCA 107A

ANTELOPE SPRING WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-107A)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

1,098 acres

The Antelope Spring WSA is located in Inyo County in the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The closest community is Bishop, located roughly 15 miles west. The WSA includes 1,054 acres of public land, administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and 44 acres of private land (see Map 1 and Table 1).

This area is bounded on the north and west by the Inyo National Forest, on the south by State Route 168 and on the east by topography and a section of the Antelope Springs Access Road.

Within this study area, terrain is composed of a low-rolling, moderately sloping bajada on the east, broken by winding washes which drain into the Deep Springs Valley. The vegetative cover throughout the area consists of mixed desert scrub. Plant communities include shadscale, sagebrush scrub, and pinyon-juniper woodland. Elevation of this unit ranges from approximately 5,600 feet on the eastern side to nearly 7,000 feet in the northwest corner.

The WSA was included for further consideration during the planning process only because it adjoined an area in the Inyo National Forest, US Forest Service (USFS) that was being evaluated for potential wilderness designation.

The WSA was studied under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan, protection, use, balanced, and no action, and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0 acres recommended for
wilderness
1,054 BLM acres recommended for
nonwilderness

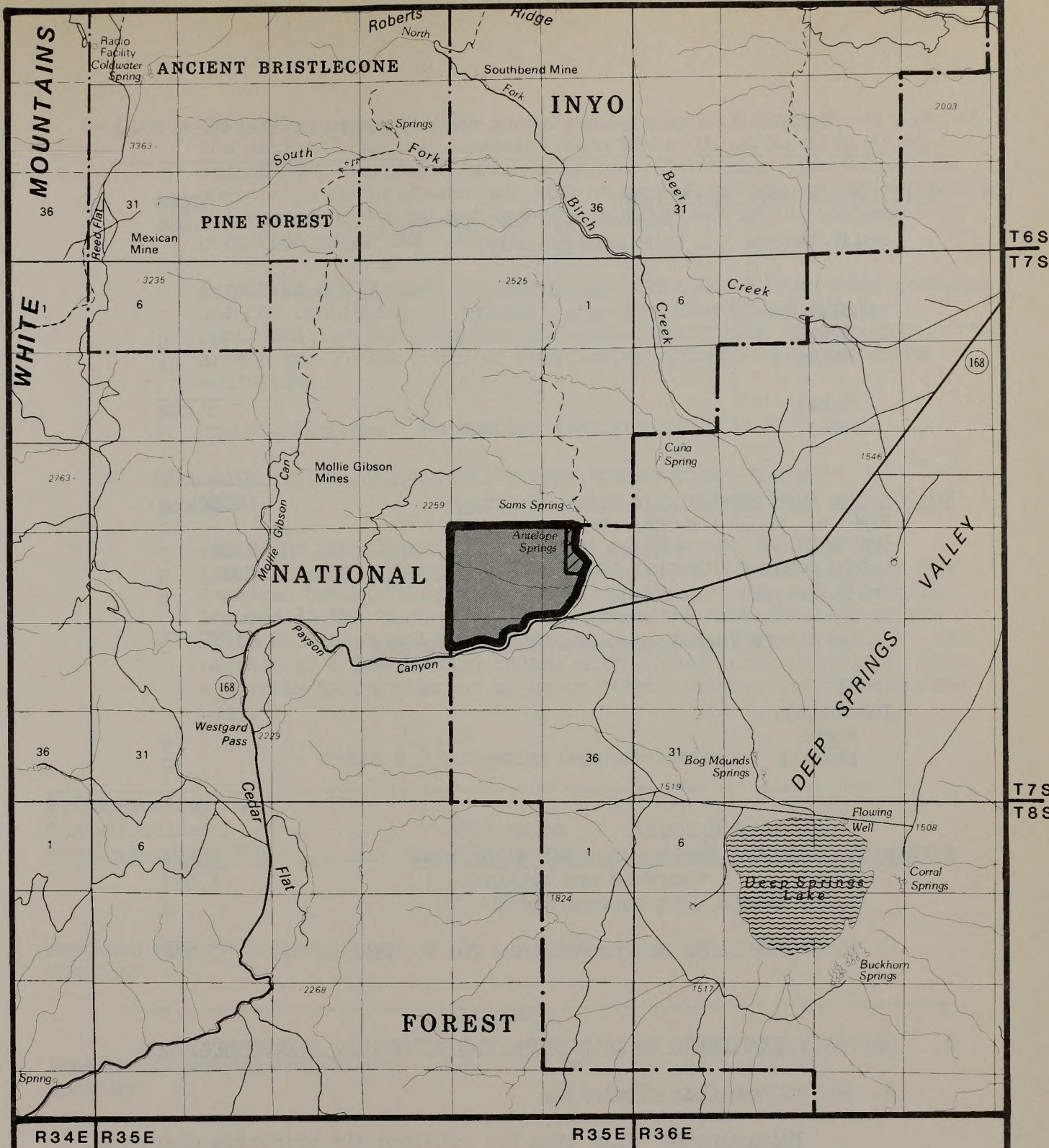
No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

When the WSA was included in the study process, it was contiguous to a RARE II study area in the Inyo National Forest. Since then, the USFS has released this area from wilderness consideration. Consequently, the Antelope Spring WSA must be considered on its own merits. There are no known primitive routes within the WSA.

This WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation because it does not satisfy the Section 2(c) wilderness criteria as stated in the Wilderness Act of 1964. The area is too small to be managed as wilderness. The Wilderness Act requires for wilderness "An area (which)... has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition..." The Antelope Spring WSA is neither 5,000 acres nor large enough to be practicably preserved.

Without the adjacent USFS RARE II wilderness area, the small size of the WSA precludes most opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The site is a sloping bajada, covered with low vegetation. Secluded areas where one can experience solitude are rare. Opportunities for primitive types of recreation are severely restricted in this relatively flat area, hardly larger than one square mile.



NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

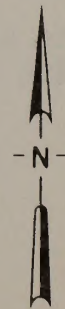
SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

STATE

PRIVATE

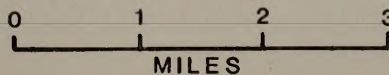
PRIVATE



Antelope Spring

Proposal

MAP-1



CDCA-107A
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	1,054
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		44
Total		<u>1,098</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	1,054
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>1,054</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: This area has retained its primitive character, affected primarily by natural forces. The few ways that do exist are substantially unnoticeable due to vegetative screening and the sloping character of the low-rolling bajada.
2. Solitude: A few opportunities for solitude are provided by the remoteness of the area and topographical variation. However, these opportunities cannot be considered outstanding without the adjacent Forest Service area. The outside sights and sound of vehicles passing on the nearby road impacts solitude throughout this unit.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The lack of man-made features and the contiguity of the USFS area provides only limited opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The area's small size inhibits outstanding opportunities for these activities.

4. Special Features: No special features exist in this unit.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 1,055 acres of the American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland ecosystem. The area is located in the transition zone between the eastern slope of the White Mountains and the western side of Deep Springs Valley. The terrain is a low rolling bajada with a shadscale community. This ecosystem is represented by seven other suitably recommended CDCA WSAs.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	24	706,057
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	16	484,806

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of three major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of four BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is the John Muir Wilderness Area located 30 miles west in the Inyo National Forest. Also within a 50 mile radius are the following designated wilderness areas: Dinkey Lakes and Monarch Wilderness Areas, administered by Inyo National Forest; and wilderness areas in Sequoia Kings Canyon National Park.

C. Manageability

The Antelope Spring WSA is not manageable as wilderness because, on its own, the area's size precludes management opportunities. The area is impacted by outside sights and sounds, and it has a limited capacity to accommodate wilderness visitors.

The WSA is bounded on the south by State Route 168 and traffic on this road can be seen and heard throughout the entire WSA. These sounds have intermittent impacts on solitude within this area that BLM management actions can not realistically reduce or mitigate.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Antelope Spring WSA is located in the BLM Fishlake Valley Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M narrative in the wilderness section of the CDCA plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) stated that the WSA was not classified for the occurrence locatable, saleable, or leasable minerals due to the lack of information. However, the G-E-M narrative stated that the WSA has probable deposits of sand and

gravel and the potential exists for metallic and nonmetallic minerals. As of December 12, 1979, there were no unpatented mining claims located in the WSA on record with the BLM.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geologic Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral surveys have been completed for the WSA because the area has been recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The State of California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) has completed a Mineral Land Classification of the area encompassing and surrounding the WSA. Preliminary results of this study have been made available to the Bureau for this analysis and are subject to change pending final publication. The CDMG study concluded that the area has an unknown potential for the occurrence of mineral resources. According to BLM records as of October, 1987, no unpatented mining claims were located within this area.

No additional information is available as of February, 1988. Due to the nondetermined mineral resource potential of the WSA, no mineral potential map was prepared.

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Range developments placed in this WSA would affect naturalness locally. If these improvements result in increased Annual Unit Months (AUMs), the increased grazing pressure would have slight negative impacts to naturalness throughout the area.
2. Impact on Grazing: This activity would be allowed to continue. Opportunities for the construction of range developments would be available.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Specific comments mentioned the natural integrity of the area and its contiguity to a USFS RARE II area.

2. Study Phase: Nine of the eleven comments received on this WSA recommended wilderness designation. The following reasons were given: (1) wilderness management would protect springs, including Antelope Spring, which are so important to bird migration patterns; (2) this area would provide a protective buffer for adjacent USFS RARE II lands; (3) students and staff of Deep Springs College desire to maintain the wilderness quality of lands adjoining the campus (campus is located roughly ten miles away); (4) the area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation; (5) the area contains excellent examples of desert pavement, a diversity of plants, a healthy population of cacti, and fine scenic qualities.

Opponents to wilderness mentioned the small acreage of the WSA and the threat of wilderness designation to economic growth.

Two responses to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79) favored wilderness because: (1) the presence of the springs makes camping for long periods feasible; (2) Antelope Springs would be protected for use by wildlife; and (3) the academic program at Deep Springs College would be enhanced.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for this area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Sylvania Mountains

CDCA 111

SYLVANIA MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-111)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 18,984 acres

The Sylvania Mountains WSA is located in Inyo County, in the far northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest rural communities are Big Pine, 31 miles southwest, and Bishop, 35 miles west. The WSA includes 18,984 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). There are no State, private or split estate lands within the WSA (See Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern boundary is Sylvania Canyon Road between Eureka Valley Road and the California/Nevada border. The eastern and southern boundary follows Cucomungo Canyon Road until it intersects Eureka Valley Road. The west boundary follows Eureka Valley Road until it again meets Sylvania Canyon Road.

The WSA contains approximately 20% alluvial fans and 80% mountains. The terrain varies from flat to rolling on the west, to rough and mountainous on the east. The elevation varies accordingly, from 5,071 feet in the extreme western portion to 7,998 feet near the California/Nevada state line. Plant types are sagebrush scrub at lower elevations, which gives way to pinyon-juniper on the upper slopes.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 0 acres recommended for wilderness
18,984 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Sylvania Mountains WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The no wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale:

(1) the area's wilderness values are marginal; (2) the area exhibits high potential for molybdenum and silver, and moderate potential for tungsten, copper, silver, lead, and rare earths; and (3) traditional uses of the area are dependent upon motorized vehicles. The value of these other actual and potential uses overshadow the mediocre wilderness values.

While the WSA marginally meets the criteria of wilderness as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, naturalness, opportunities for solitude, and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation have all been impacted by past activities. Routes of travel in the northern and southern portion of the area have reduced naturalness, and with it the feeling of solitude and the quality of the primitive recreation experience. Six miles of routes occur within the northern portion of the WSA and two miles of routes occur within the south portion of the area. Two vehicle routes intrude into the WSA from the State of Nevada and end at mining areas within the WSA. A range fence and stock watering pipeline exist within the northeast portion of the WSA.

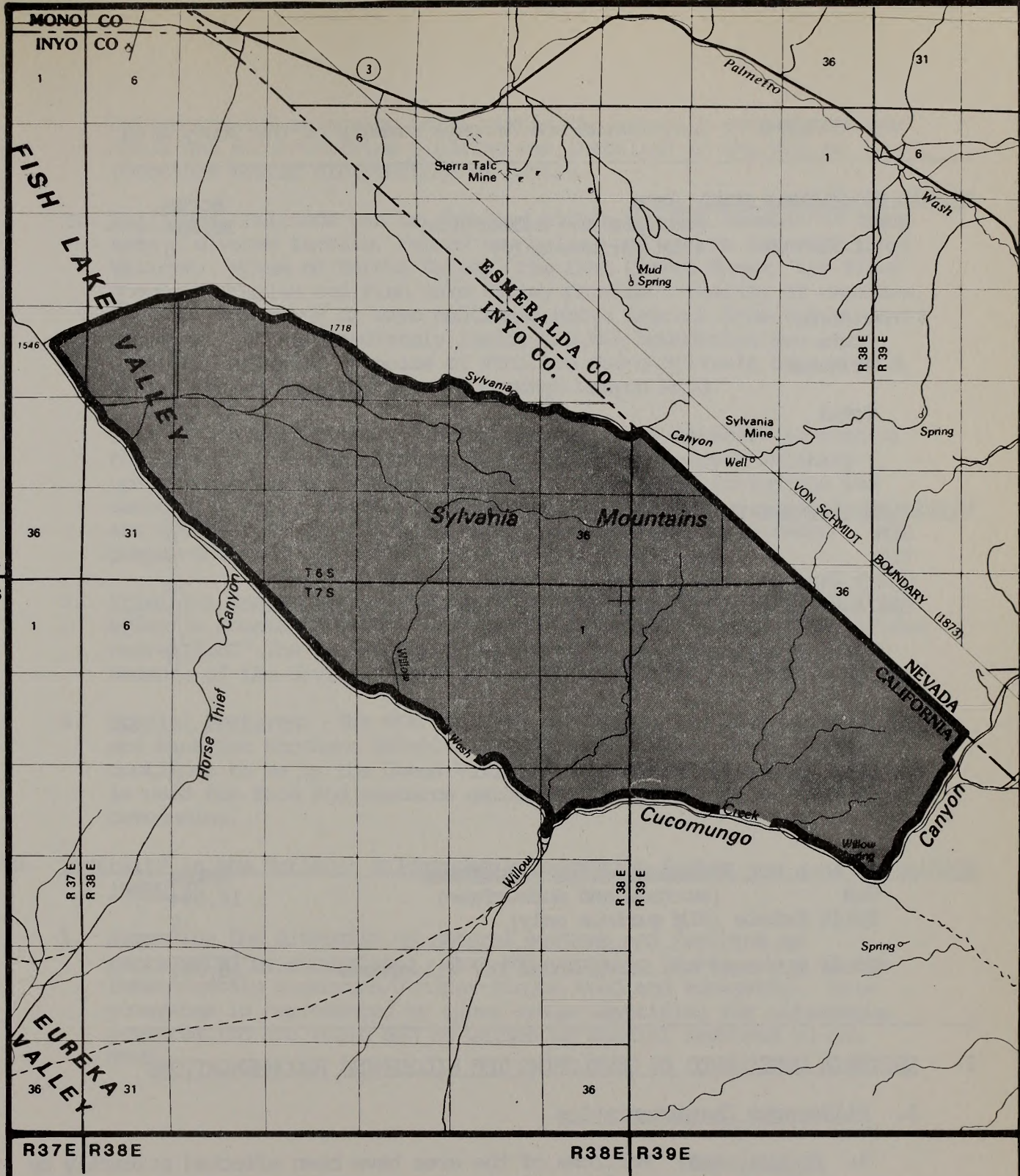
The high and moderate potential for minerals is partially supported by actual production, attesting to the area's value for uses other than wilderness. The extreme southeastern portion of the WSA is judged to have high potential for molybdenum and silver. During 1987, 800 ounces of silver were produced from one mine within this part of the WSA. Moderate potential for tungsten occurs in the east central portion of the WSA. The southeastern two-thirds of the area has been assigned a moderate potential for copper, molybdenum, silver, lead, and rare earths.

The WSA contains the Last Chance Grazing Allotment and the Piper Mountain Burro Herd Management Area. Management of burros could be complicated by restrictions on management techniques if the area were designated wilderness.

The WSA continues to be used by the Owens Valley and Mono Lake Paiute Native Americans, and to a lesser extent, by the Panamint Shoshone (Timbisha) for subsistence and religious purposes. Uses include late summer pinyon nut collection and associated areas of religious sensitivity. Areas of religious and ceremonial significance include the pinyon collection sites, natural features, watering sites, some currently used temporary camping areas, and some material resources sites. Access for most of these uses is by vehicle, although some areas are accessed by foot.

General recreation use of the Sylvania Mountains has been almost exclusively dependent upon motorized vehicles. Popular activities are deer and chukar hunting, camping, off-highway vehicle touring, and sightseeing. Cucomungo Canyon, in particular, is used for semi-primitive motorized forms of recreation.

Both Native American and general recreation uses would be displaced or severely constrained by wilderness designation. These activities have traditionally been primarily vehicle-based.



NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

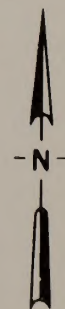
STATE

PRIVATE

PRIVATE

**Sylvania Mountains
Proposal
MAP-1**

0 1 2 3
MILES



CDCA-111
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	18,984
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
Total		<u>18,984</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	18,984
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>18,984</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Portions of the area have been affected primarily by natural forces, with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable within the majority of the area. However, a pre-FLPMA bladed vehicle route which was not identified in the wilderness inventory crosses the northern portion of the WSA, starting at Eureka Valley Road and traversing cross-country four miles to Sylvania Canyon. A spur route extends southeast for two miles and ends at a mining adit. A two-mile bladed route also exists in the southern portion of the WSA. This route enters the WSA from Cucomungo Canyon and ends at two mining adits. A series of routes enter the WSA from the Nevada

border and end at mining adits within the area. A permanent range fence and stock watering pipeline was installed in the WSA to encourage better distribution of cattle.

2. Solitude: Solitude can be obtained within the WSA because of the area's diverse terrain, rugged mountains, and narrow interior valleys. Views of Eureka Valley, the Last Chance Range, the Piper Mountain complex and Fish Lake Valley provide a feeling of vastness. However, the roads or ways mentioned above detract from the sense of solitude. Areas immediately inside the WSA boundaries are minimally affected by noise of vehicles using Sylvania Canyon Road, Eureka Valley Wash Road, and Cucomungo Canyon Road.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The complex topography of the Sylvania Mountains offers opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The quality of the experience is reduced somewhat because of the obvious signs of civilization mentioned previously.
4. Special Features: The WSA has been traditionally used by the Paiute and Panamint Shoshone (Timbisha) Native Americans. Most use continues to be by the Owens Valley and Mono Lake Paiute. The area is used for food and resource gathering, camping, and religious ceremonies.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 18,984 acres of the Intermountain Sagebrush/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland ecosystem. This ecosystem is represented by other areas identified for wilderness preservation and would add no unique or special features to the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	4	81,301	74	2,132,319
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	3	61,701	18	346,849

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of two major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of four BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is the John Muir Wilderness, managed by the Inyo National Forest, 45 miles west of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Sylvania Mountains WSA is manageable as wilderness, although management of the area would be difficult. Recreationists using the north side of the area could easily gain unauthorized access to this part of the WSA by vehicle because of the openness of the area. The remainder of the area would be easier to manage due to its rugged physical features. An intensive signing program would have to be established and a diligent presence would be needed on the north and east sides to enforce a closure for motorized vehicles. If mining

exploration and development within the WSA were to occur on any valid claims, noise, dust, and physical intrusions caused by roads, buildings, and facilities associated with operations would cause management problems.

The management of the grandfathered Last Chance Grazing Allotment would not be affected by wilderness designation.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Sylvania Mountains WSA is located within the BLM Fish Lake Valley and Last Chance Range Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Areas (GRAs). The G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 states that the WSA has a potential for gold, silver, lead, tungsten, tin, copper, molybdenum, sand and gravel.

The BLM GRA file data supports the EIS statement by providing evidence for a moderate potential classification for the occurrence of several metallic minerals in the southeastern two-thirds of the WSA, and a high potential classification for the occurrence of molybdenum in the extreme southeastern portion of the WSA along the California-Nevada border. A low potential for the development of salable material deposits of sand, gravel and clay was delineated for the northern one-third of the WSA from the BLM GRA file data and report.

A small area in the east-central portion of the WSA was covered by 20 mining claims as of 1980. A reported occurrence of tungsten in the area under claim provided the evidence for a moderate potential classification for tungsten. The BLM GRA file data supports the classification of a larger area in the southern two-thirds of the WSA as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of copper, molybdenum, silver, lead, and rare earth mineralization. The moderate potential classification is based primarily on geochemical anomalies in association with a sheared and altered granitic host rock. This type of geologic environment is often associated with a porphyry-type base metal mineral deposit model. The area in the extreme southeastern portion of the WSA along the California-Nevada border was classified as having a high occurrence potential for molybdenum. The BLM GRA report cites a 1972 publication (Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology, Bulletin 78) that describes the molybdenum deposit in the southern Sylvania Mountains as being one of the finest and most promising molybdenum deposits in Esmeralda County, Nevada. The BLM GRA file data supports the possibility of a porphyry-type molybdenum deposit through geochemical anomalies. The BLM GRA report classified the northern one-third of the WSA as having a low development potential for saleable minerals such as

sand, gravel and clay. The low development potential was assigned based on the remoteness of the WSA and the lack of a local market for these commodities.

The BLM GRA classified the area as having an unknown potential for the occurrence of radioactive and nonmetallic minerals due to the lack of sufficient data.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: The U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Bureau of Mines have not completed a mineral survey for the WSA since it was recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The California Division of Mines and Geology has completed a Mineral Land Classification of the WSA. Results from the classification study will be released as an Open File Report in February, 1988.

Since 1980, two plans of operation for activities in the WSA have been filed with the Ridgecrest Resource Area within the WSA. The first plan was submitted in 1986, and proposed an exploratory drilling program for borates in the central portion of the WSA. Results of the drilling program have not been made public. The second plan was submitted in the spring of 1987, for an underground mining and production operation for silver in the southeastern portion of the WSA. Approximately 800 ounces of silver were produced from the Heavy Lode claim group since approval of the plan of operations. The area around the Heavy Lode is classified on Map 2 as having a high occurrence potential under the BLM classification system.

Further mineral interest within the WSA is indicated by the following BLM mining claim data recorded December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	8	8	N/A	160	160
Placer	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mill Site	N/A	3	3	N/A	15	15
Total	N/A	11	11	N/A	175	175

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impacts on Wilderness Values: Mineral exploration and development would cause localized adverse impacts to wilderness values in areas of high and moderate mineral potential. Continued vehicle use on designated routes of travel would also have an adverse effect on wilderness values.

2. Impacts on Native American Uses and Values: Opportunities for Native Americans to use the area for traditional gathering and religious ceremonies would not be affected. Sacred features would be protected under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Any changes in physical appearance or use of sacred sites would be made in consultation with the appropriate Native American group.
3. Impacts on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for exploration and development of locatable minerals would continue to be available throughout the WSA subject to applicable laws and regulations and guidelines defined in the CDCA Plan.
4. Impacts on Access and Motorized Recreation: Opportunities for motorized recreation and access on designated routes of travel would continue to be available.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments received on the Sylvania Mountains WSA supported the findings.
2. Study Phase: Seven of the eight comments received on this WSA, favored wilderness designation. Spectacular scenic quality was the foremost reason. The area was described as "part of the most pristine area of the California Desert," with minimal human disturbance. Geologic diversity is high; the scenic cliffs of Willow Wash and Cucomungo Canyon provide excellent subjects for photographers and painters; and the area provides solitude and excellent opportunities for primitive recreation, including hiking, camping, and nature study. Outstanding prehistoric and historic values are also present.

One writer judged the area unsuitable for wilderness for the following reasons: (1) wilderness designation would interfere with management of wild horses and burros; (2) range improvements, active mining, and occupancy trespass are present in the area; and (3) there are overflights of military aircraft.

One comment was received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/25/79). It favored wilderness because of the area's high solitude and scenic values.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for the area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the proposed plan. Off-highway vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Last Chance Mountain

CDCA 112

Last Chance
Mountain

CDCA 112

LAST CHANCE MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-112)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 42,202 acres

The Last Chance Mountain WSA is located in Inyo County in the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest rural communities are Big Pine, 35 miles west, and Bishop, 50 miles northwest. The area is composed of 40,254 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1,871 acres of State lands and 77 acres of private land. No split estate lands are located within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The north WSA boundary follows the California/Nevada border from Cucomungo Canyon to Last Chance Canyon Road, ten miles southeast. The boundary then trends west for six miles along Last Chance Canyon Road. A cherrystemmed road branches off to the north at this point and continues into the WSA for three miles. The boundary returns to Last Chance Canyon Road following it for two miles west. At this point the boundary juts north, east, and then south for four miles, following topography to avoid areas disturbed by mining activities. The boundary meets Eureka Valley Road and follows the road to its intersection with Loretto Mine Road. The western boundary is the Loretto Mine Road and the northern boundary follows this same road east for three miles until it meets Last Chance Canyon. A cherrystemmed road juts into the WSA at this point and trends south for three-quarters of a mile. The boundary then returns to Cucomungo Canyon Road and follows it north for two miles until it meets the California/Nevada border.

The WSA contains approximately 80% mountains, 10% alluvial fans, and 10% dissected fans. The terrain is rough and mountainous throughout the majority of the WSA. The elevation varies from 3,360 feet near the west-central edge to 8,456 feet at the top of Last Chance Mountain. Vegetation in the lower elevations is mostly shadscale and blackbrush types. The higher elevations are generally mixed desert shrubs with a pinyon pine/juniper forest type vegetation.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action. A summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. <u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> ---	0	acres recommended for wilderness
	40,254	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Last Chance Mountain WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

While the WSA met the general criteria of wilderness as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, its value as wilderness is exceeded by its potential for other uses. The no wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) in the eastern one-third of the WSA, naturalness has been reduced by past mining exploration and the construction of associated access routes; and (2) the area has high and moderate potential for minerals and significant mining interest.

Mining activity within the eastern one-third of the WSA has caused a loss of naturalness. There are approximately 12 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. There are ten miles of vehicle routes within this area which are associated with mining activity.

High potential exists for molybdenum on the eastern edge and moderate potential exists for tungsten, molybdenum, and rare earths in the east portion of the WSA. On the western slope of the Last Chance Range, there is moderate potential for silver and lead. The northeast portion has high potential for sulphur, gypsum, and mercury. As of December 1987, there were 251 mining claims covering over 5,000 acres of the WSA. Exploration for locatables is ongoing within the area as approved by BLM.

Motorized access to traditional Panamint Shoshone pinyon nut gathering places would be restricted if the area were to be designated as wilderness.

The WSA supports the Last Chance Grazing Allotment and a herd of wild burros. Management of wild burros would be complicated by the restrictions on the use of mechanized equipment if the WSA were designated wilderness.

T6S
T7S

T7S
T8S

T8S
T9S

R38E R39E

R39E R40E

R40E R41E

NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

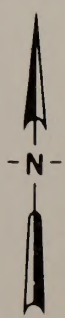
STATE

PRIVATE

PRIVATE

**Last Chance Mountain
Proposal
MAP-1**

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MILES



CDCA-112
JUNE, 1988

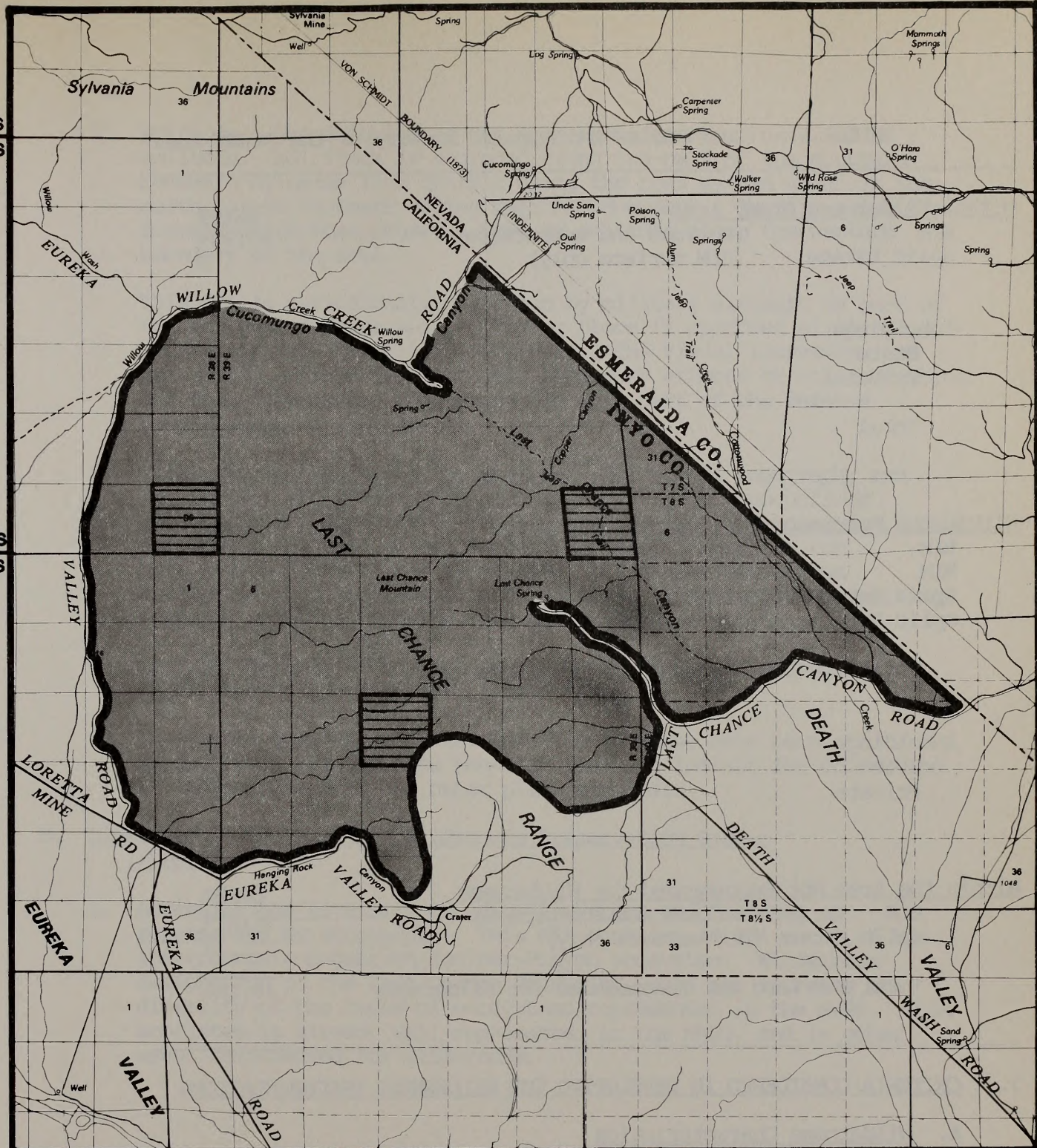


TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	40,254
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		1,871
Private		77
Total		<u>42,202</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	40,254
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>40,254</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Approximately two-thirds of the area has been affected primarily by natural forces, with man's imprints substantially unnoticeable. The eastern one-third of the area has been impacted by mining activity. Along the southern boundary a vehicle route enters Last Chance Canyon for two miles. Another vehicle route enters the WSA from the California/Nevada border and parallels the eastern boundary for four miles and then exits into Nevada. A short spur route enters the WSA from this route and divides into two routes.

2. Solitude: The majority of the area contains opportunities for solitude. Solitude is degraded along one-half of the southern boundary by noise from traffic using the road system which is the north access to Death Valley National Monument. Traffic noise along Eureka Valley Road causes a loss of solitude along the western boundary of the area.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The varied topography and vegetation, along with the mountains, provide for unconfined movement and opportunities for a primitive type of recreation. Deep canyons of the Last Chance Range provide opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Primitive recreation activities which occur within the area include backpacking, hiking, camping, painting, hunting, and photography.
4. Special Features: The Last Chance Range provides habitat for a small population of desert bighorn sheep.

The higher elevations of the Last Chance Range have been traditionally used by the Panamint Shoshone Indians for collection of pinyon pine nuts and other plant materials.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 40,254 acres of the Intermountain Sagebrush/Juniper-Pinyon ecosystem. Wilderness designation of the Last Chance Mountains would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS. This ecosystem is already well represented in the NWPS, and in other areas recommended for wilderness.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	4	81,301	74	2,111,049
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	3	61,701	18	325,579

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of two major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of seven BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is the John Muir Wilderness, managed by the Inyo National Forest 30 miles away.

C. Manageability

The Last Chance Mountains WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, with over 250 mining claims and high potential for molybdenum, sulphur, gypsum, and mercury; and moderate area potential for tungsten, copper, silver, lead, and rare earths, mineral exploration and development of any valid claims would seriously affect the WSA's wilderness values (see Energy and Minerals Resource Values).

Management requirements for livestock grazing within the Last Chance grazing allotment would not seriously affect manageability of the WSA.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Last Chance Mountain WSA is in the BLM Last Chance Range Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III), stated in 1980 that the WSA has a potential for the occurrence of metallic minerals, sulphur, gypsum, uranium, dolomite, limestone, barite, sand, gravel, clay, and oil and gas. Approximately 300 unpatented mining claims, located in the extreme eastern portion of the WSA along the California-Nevada border, were recorded with BLM on December 12, 1979.

The BLM GRA file data in 1980 supports the G-E-M evaluation statement in the EIS. The 1980 GRA file data classified the eastern portion of the WSA along the California-Nevada border as having a high potential for the occurrence of molybdenum. The area was under claim and was being developed as the Cucomungo molybdenum deposit. To the west of the Cucomungo deposit and east of the crest of the Last Chance Range, an area was classified by the BLM GRA report and file data as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of lead, silver, tungsten, copper, molybdenum, and rare earth mineralization. The 1980 BLM GRA report based the size of the area on anomalous geochemical values for rare earth, silver, lead, copper, and tin (base metals), beryllium, lithium, and a favorable geologic environment for mineral deposits.

The BLM GRA report and file data classified two areas on the western slope of the Last Chance Range in the southern and central portion of the WSA as having a low potential for the occurrence of lead and silver. The geochemical anomalies associated with these areas were significantly higher than other areas sampled in the study area. The 1980 GRA report also states that the geologic environment in these area is very favorable for the occurrence of localized, high grade deposits of base metals.

A small area within the WSA northeast of Crater was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a high potential for the occurrence of sulphur, gypsum, and mercury. The BLM GRA report states that the Crater claim group, which extends into the WSA, has produced approximately 12,000 tons of sulphur and an unknown quantity of mercury. The BLM GRA report also states that gypsum is in association with the sulphur deposits located on the Crater claim group.

Data from the 1980 BLM GRA file was insufficient to classify the WSA for nonmetallic mineral potential. However, the BLM GRA report stated that rock types favorable for the occurrence of commercial limestone and dolomite and anomalous geochemical values for barite exist in the WSA. A very small isolated area in the southwest portion of the WSA north of Hanging Rock Canyon was classified by the BLM GRA report as having a low potential for the occurrence of uranium, based on a reported occurrence documented in the file data and a favorable structural environment. The remainder of the WSA was not evaluated for uranium potential due to lack of sufficient data.

The extreme southern portion of the WSA was classified by the BLM GRA report as having a low potential for the occurrence of oil and gas. The low potential classification was based primarily on speculative geological modeling for overthrust trapping of oil and gas deposits in association with the Last Chance Thrust Fault. The BLM GRA report did not classify the WSA for the occurrence of sodium and potassium mineralization due to insufficient data.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral survey has been conducted for the WSA since it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. The California Division of Mines and Geology has completed a Mineral Land Classification of the WSA. Results of the study have not been made public, but the report is expected to be released in February, 1988.

Since 1980, one plan of operations for the drilling of 14 deep exploration holes on the western slope of the Last Chance Range on the Hermit Creek claim group was approved by the BLM in August, 1984. The mineral exploration company indicated that an extensive geological mapping and geochemical sampling program had defined a possible mineralized target area located in an area designated by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having anomalous geochemical values for silver and lead mineralization. Based on this new evidence and existing data, an enlarged area on the western slope of the Last Chance Range in the south-central portion of the WSA has been classified as having moderate potential for the occurrence of precious metal mineralization under the BLM classification system (see Map 2).

In 1987, U.S. Borax identified potential borate deposits in the extreme southwestern portion of the WSA on the Eva claim group, north of Loretto Mine Road and east of Eureka Valley Road. An exploration drilling program was approved by the BLM in July, 1987 and drilling was conducted in December, 1987. Results have not been made public, nor has the area's potential been classified by BLM.

Currently, there is exploration activity proposed and being conducted within and at the borders of the WSA. Further mineral interest in the WSA is indicated by the following BLM unpatented mining claim records dated December 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	249	249	N/A	4,980	4,980
Placer	N/A	2	2	N/A	80	80
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	251	251	N/A	5 060	5 060

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

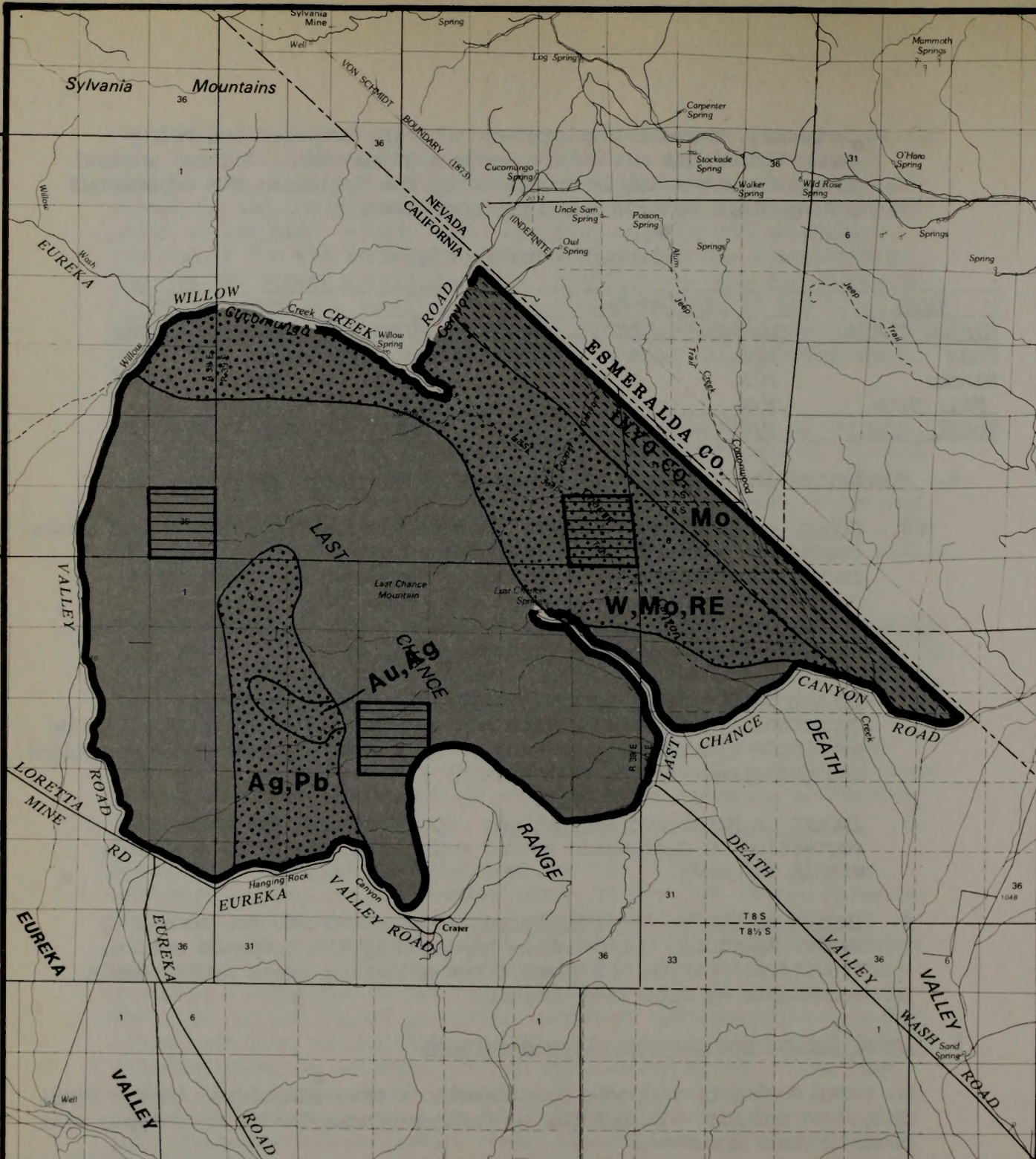
1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Noise, surface disturbance, and access requirements for mineral development and off-highway vehicle recreation, could have moderate to high adverse impacts on naturalness, solitude, and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Impacts would be most severe within the areas of high to moderate mineral potential.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for exploration and development would continue to be available within the area subject to applicable laws and regulations and guidelines in the CDCA Plan.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation: Opportunities for motorized recreation on designated routes would continue to be available within the area.
4. Impact on Native American Values: Opportunities for access by Native Americans would not be hindered by the proposed action. Traditional pinyon and plant fiber gathering areas would remain accessible by motorized vehicle.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

T6S
T7S

T7S
T8S



R38E R39E

R39E R40E

R40E R41E

T8S

T9S

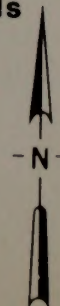
- NONE** Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

Explanation

- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- Au** Gold
- W** Tungsten
- Mo** Molybdenum
- Ag** Silver
- Pb** Lead
- RE** Rare Earth



**Last Chance Mountain
Mineral Resource Potential**

0 1 2 3
MILES

**MAP-2
CDCA-112**

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments supported the findings and also pointed out the varied recreational opportunities.
2. Study Phase: Twelve of the 17 comments received on the WSA, Last Chance Canyon WSA, favored wilderness designation. Outstanding scenic quality was the most common reason given. Other values mentioned were wildlife, vegetation, historic resources, and particularly, the spectacular geology and educational opportunities of the "badlands" area, with its eroded sandstone and multi-colored rocks. Recreation activities, including hiking, camping, backpacking, climbing, photography, and painting were highly recommended in this area. Rockhounding was also popular.

Two letters agreed with the deletion of the southern portion of the WSA, the mining area saddling the mountains near the origin of Hanging Rock Canyon.

Three comments opposed wilderness designation. One mining company stated that the area has high potential for molybdenum. Another said there were too many roads present, and a third wanted vehicular access to permit rockhounding and family camping.

Five letters were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). All favored wilderness because of the outstanding natural beauty of the area, the rare plants and outstanding botanical habitats of the Bonanza King formation, and the easy accessibility. (There has never been any rare or endangered plant species found within the WSA).

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for the area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the proposed plan. Motor vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Piper Mountain

CDCA 115

PIPER MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-115)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

72,931 acres

Piper Mountain WSA is located in Inyo County in the far northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest communities are Big Pine, approximately 30 miles southwest, and Bishop, approximately 40 miles west. The WSA includes 70,793 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1,883 acres of State California lands and 255 acres of private land. There are no split estate lands within the WSA (See Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern boundary starts at State Highway 168 and trends east cross-country for two miles to meet Eureka Valley Road. The boundary follows Eureka Valley Road southeast for nine miles to Cucomongo Canyon. The boundary then turns south for two miles, still following Eureka Valley Road. At the junction of Eureka Valley Road and Loretto Mine Road, the boundary trends northwest for three miles and then follows Loretto Mine Road southwest for nine miles. A cherrystemmed road juts into the WSA for one mile at this point. The boundary continues along Loretto Mine Road southwest four miles until it meets the Inyo National Forest boundary. The boundary follows the Inyo National Forest border along section lines north for six miles. The boundary then follows a dirt road on the east side of Deep Springs Lake north for ten miles until it meets State Highway 168. The boundary follows State Highway 168 for four miles until it meets the extreme northern part of the WSA, completing the boundary.

The WSA contains about 65% mountains, 15% dissected alluvial fans, 10% alluvial fans, 5% plains, and 5% hills. The terrain is mountainous in the western two-thirds of the WSA throughout the Piper and Inyo Mountains. A small portion of the Sylvania Mountains are included on the eastern side of the WSA. Also on the eastern side are large alluvial fans which cover large portions of the area.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan, (use, balanced, protection, and no action) and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0	acres recommended for wilderness
70,793	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Piper Mountain WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented using all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

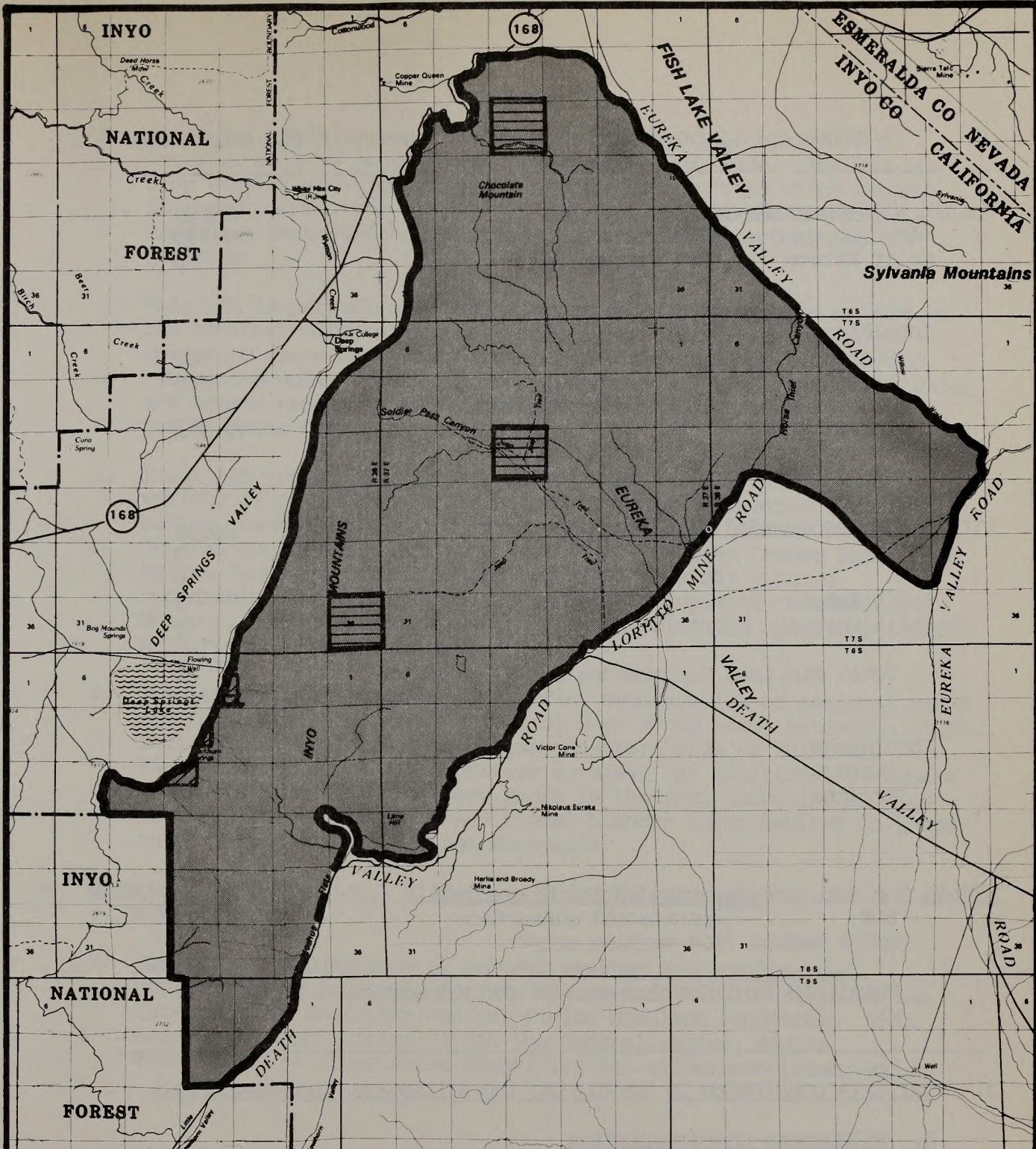
All wilderness is the environmentally preferable alternative, as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

While the WSA does meet the general criteria of wilderness as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, the area's value as wilderness is outweighed by its potential for other uses. The no-wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the WSA has moderate potential for molybdenum, copper, tungsten, lead, silver, uranium, thorium, sand and gravel, and pumice; (2) naturalness is affected by a series of routes which bisect the middle of the unit and mining scars which occur in the northern portion of the area; and (3) solitude is diminished by vehicular noise from State Highway 168 in the northern portion of the area, and from use of the Loretto Mine Road along the southern boundary.

Portions of the WSA have moderate potential for the following minerals: copper and molybdenum in the western portion; copper, tungsten, lead, and silver in the northern and southern portions; and uranium and thorium in the extreme northeastern and southwestern portions. The southern boundary has a moderate potential for sand and gravel. The northwestern boundary has a moderate potential for pumice. As of December 1987, there were 101 mining claims primarily located in the north and southeastern portions of the WSA.

There are approximately 37 miles of routes of travel including primitive way, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. A series of routes bisect the middle of the WSA and detract from the naturalness of the area. The routes are used to gain access to mining prospects within the area. Within the extreme northern portion of the area are two power lines with associated rights-of-ways which weave in and out of the boundary of the WSA. Mining activity has caused a loss of naturalness within the northern portion of the WSA with mining roads, adits, and disturbed areas associated with mining.

Solitude is diminished because of traffic noise along State Highway 168 in the extreme northern portion of the area. Traffic along Eureka Valley Road causes a loss of solitude near the eastern border of the WSA. The southern boundary of the WSA is Loretto Mine Road, a well-traveled route into Eureka Valley also used as a northern entrance to Death Valley National Monument. Use of this route also affects solitude within the WSA near this boundary.



T6S
T7S

T7S
T8S

T8S
T9S

NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

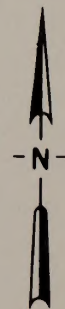
STATE

PRIVATE

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE



**Piper Mountain
Proposal
MAP-1**

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-115
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	70,793
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		1,883
Private		255
Total		<u>72,931</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	70,793
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>70,793</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area has been affected primarily by natural forces, with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable for the majority of the area. Two sets of powerlines traverse in and out of the extreme northwest boundary. Numerous vehicle routes, some previously bladed, traverse the WSA and reduce naturalness throughout.

2. Solitude: This area's diverse terrain, rugged mountains, and interior valleys provide opportunities for solitude. The WSA has deep canyons and high ridges in the western portion which create isolated zones. The eastern portion has rolling and sometimes expansive unobstructed views which also offer opportunities for solitude.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The terrain offers a wide variety of primitive and unconfined types of recreation such as hiking, backpacking, painting, photography, and general sightseeing. Outstanding views of the Inyo Mountains, the Last Chance Range, the Saline Range, and Fishlake and Eureka Valleys all enhance opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. However, numerous vehicle routes somewhat diminish opportunities for primitive recreation experiences.
4. Special Features: Approximately five square miles of seasonal range for the Last Chance Range desert bighorn sheep herd, estimated at 65 individuals, is located in the southeastern side of this WSA. Bighorn sheep are a BLM sensitive species. An additional 24 square miles of former bighorn sheep range in the Inyo Mountains is also located within this WSA. Additional bighorn sheep habitat is found in the northern Deep Springs Mountains.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System
(NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 70,793 acres of the Intermountain Sagebrush/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland ecosystem. This ecosystem is ubiquitous within the general region, and is represented in other areas identified for wilderness preservation.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	4	81,301	74	2,080,510
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	3	61,701	18	295,040

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of two major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of five BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated area is the John Muir Wilderness, 35 miles away.

C. Manageability

The Piper Mountain WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, there are several serious manageability conflicts that would have to be resolved.

Mineral development could seriously threaten the WSA's wilderness values. Significant portions of this WSA have moderate to high mineral potential, and the WSA is encumbered by 101 unpatented mining claims (see Energy and Mineral Resource Values). In view of the area's mineral potential, it is likely that some of these claims would withstand a

validity examination, making their development possible within a designated wilderness. To assure the long-term protection of wilderness values, it could be necessary to acquire the valid mineral rights. Otherwise, naturalness and opportunities for solitude will suffer if future mineral development occurs.

Reclamation of the extensive number of routes of travel in the WSA would help to improve the wilderness values in the WSA. The powerline right-of-way which weaves through the northern boundary would cause management conflicts between maintaining wilderness values and maintaining the powerline. Private inholdings on the western boundary adjacent to Deep Springs Lake could cause management problems if it were developed for a use which is incompatible with wilderness.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Piper Mountain WSA (CDCA-115) is located within portions of the BLM Eureka Valley, Fish Lake Valley, and Saline Range Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Areas (GRAs). BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness portion of the Desert Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) indicated in 1980 that the WSA had potential for metals, uranium/thorium, limestone, sand and gravel and pumice. An undetermined number of unpatented mining claims for uranium in the northeastern part of the WSA were known to be recorded with BLM on December 12, 1979.

The BLM GRA files in 1980 support the EIS G-E-M evaluation in the EIS. The files indicated that the western half of the WSA had a moderate potential for the occurrence of disseminated porphyry type copper and molybdenum, but none were classified and mapped. A moderate potential for the occurrence of skarn-type deposits of copper, tungsten and lead-silver was assigned to the southern and northern portions of the WSA as shown on Map 2. The extreme northwestern and southwestern portions of the WSA were assigned a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium and thorium based on gamma-ray anomalies, known occurrences and favorable geology. Limestone and dolomite were known to occur along the Loretto Mine Road within the southern boundary of the WSA in 1980. The area on the accompanying map was assigned a high potential for the occurrence of limestone and dolomite based on past production (production records unavailable). A deposit of sand and gravel (valued at about \$250,000) within the southern boundary was given a moderate potential for occurrence. A deposit of pumice (about one million tons of reserves) along the northwestern boundary was given a moderate potential for occurrence. Clays within Eureka Valley were known (from the 1980 GRA report) to contain anomalous

concentrations of lithium based on USGS drill hole data at the Eureka playa, 15 miles south of the WSA, but no verifiable data exists to show that the anomaly extends into the WSA.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral surveys were conducted in the WSA since it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

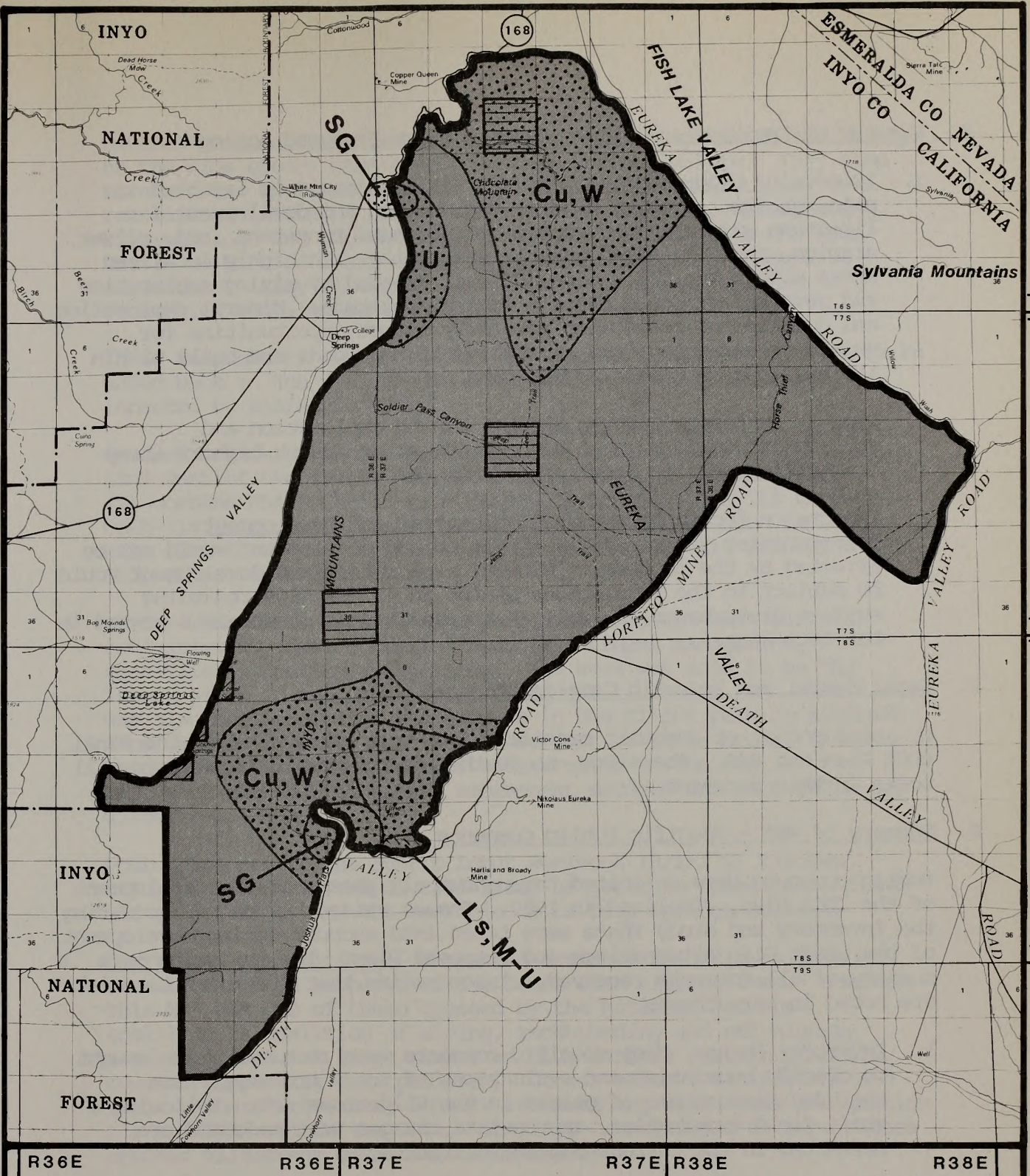
Additional information was available in 1980 on a map titled Mining Districts and Mineral Deposits of California (Map Sheets 1 of 2; no date) by Charles A. Mardirosian. Sheet 1 of the map identified the Loretto Mining District on the southern edge of the WSA. Production data on map sheet 2 indicated that up to \$1,000,000 in copper was produced from the Loretto Mining District, however, the period of operation was not identified.

A 1948 publication, titled Copper in California written by O.P. Jenkins (California Division of Mines and Geology Bulletin No. 144) listed the Loretto Mine as a copper mine located immediately outside the southern boundary of the WSA. No production from the mine was known and the mine was not active in 1987. This publication also identified the Copper Queen (or Oasis) Mine approximately one mile outside the northern boundary of the WSA. Although a 50-foot deep shaft had been sunk on a granite-limestone contact in search of copper, no production from the mine was known. The mine was not active in 1987. The geology associated with both these mines, a limestone skarn in contact with a granitic intrusive, extends into the WSA identified in the 1980 BLM GRA. This additional information supports the BLM 1980 moderate potential classification for metallic minerals.

A review of the BLM mining claim records dated December 11, 1987 indicated that the WSA contains 101 unpatented mining claims (Table 4), principally in the north- and south-eastern portions of the WSA. There is no current mining activity in the WSA but interest remains high for exploration as is indicated by the number/percentage of the WSA under mining claims.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	62	62	N/A	1,240	1,240
Placer	N/A	29	29	N/A	1,160	1,160
Mill Site	N/A	10	10	N/A	50	50
Total	N/A	101	101	N/A	2,450	2,450



T6S
T7S

T7S
T8S

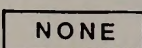

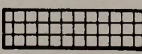

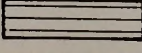
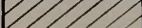
T8S
T9S

R36E



R36E R37E

R37E R38E

R38E

- | | |
|---|---|
|  | Recommended for Wilderness |
|  | Recommended for Non Wilderness |
|  | Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness |
|  | Split Estate |
|  | State |
|  | Private |

Explanation

- | | |
|---|--|
|  | High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
|  | Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |

M

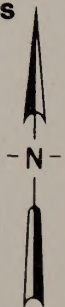
H

Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area

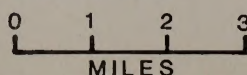
High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- W** Tungsten
Cu Cooper
U Uranium/Thorium
SG Sand & Gravel
LS Limestone/Dolomite



**Piper Mountain
Mineral Resource Potential**



**MAP-2
CDCA-115**

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impacts on Wilderness Values: Naturalness could be impacted in site-specific areas by mineral exploration and development for limestone and dolomite, copper, molybdenum, tungsten, lead, silver, uranium, thorium, sand, gravel, and pumice. In highly localized areas within the WSA, noise and dust created by mining exploration and development could cause a loss of solitude. Mineral exploration and development could also adversely affect opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation if new roads are built within the WSA to gain access to minerals.
2. Impacts on Desert Bighorn Sheep: Mining exploration and development would have an adverse impact on desert bighorn sheep habitat in specific locations within the area.
3. Impacts on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for mineral exploration and development would not be affected by the proposal. Mineral exploration and development would be subject to the regulations stated in 43 CFR 3809 regarding surface disturbance, as well as any additional constraints stated in the CDCA Plan.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Many specific comments were received which sought to clarify boundaries and evaluations of roads and ways, some included discussions of points in the Wilderness Act. Following a staff field examination, appropriate changes were made and are reflected in the current map and narrative.
2. Study Phase: Thirty-six letters were received on this WSA. Thirty-one favored wilderness designation, four opposed it, and one was neutral. Scenic quality and the opportunities for primitive recreation were the most frequently mentioned attributes of the area.

Several respondents from Deep Springs College emphasized the beauty of the wide open vistas seen from Deep Springs Valley. They also stressed the opportunities for solitude and for primitive recreation, including hiking, backpacking, camping, nature study, birdwatching, and photography. One writer stated that the area should be part of Death Valley, but lacking that, it should be wilderness. Easy accessibility of the area for wilderness recreation was also mentioned.

Three respondents requested that the southern portion of the area be added back to the WSA, though BLM staff felt the area was too impacted by mining scrapes.

Several boundary changes were proposed: (1) delete the strip of land west of the divide between Deep Springs and Eureka Valley; (2) combine WSA CDCA-115 with WSAs CDCA-108 and CDCA-112 through CDCA-114 into a single study area; (3) combine WSA CDCA-115 with WSAs CDCA-108 and CDCA-109; (4) combine WSA CDCA-115 with WSAs CDCA-113, CDCA-114, and CDCA-108.

Writers who opposed wilderness designation feared that certain activities would be curtailed under wilderness management, specifically hunting and grazing. The area was said to be the finest place in the state for hunting quail, chukar, and rabbit. It was also mentioned that the area is in the flight path of aircraft from George Air Force Base and is subject to sonic booms. Another respondent stated that over 15 square miles of the WSA were pock-marked with mining assessment scrapes and were unfit for wilderness.

Four responses to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79) favored wilderness, due to the diverse array of geologic formations, plant and animal life, and the convenience to Deep Springs College.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for the area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the proposed plan. Off-highway vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Saline Valley

CDCA 117

SALINE VALLEY WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-117)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

464,701 acres

The Saline Valley WSA is located in Inyo County, in the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest communities are Lone Pine, 67 miles northwest, and Olancho, 55 miles west. The area is composed of 450,727 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 12,610 acres of State land, 1,360 acres of private land, and 4 acres of other Federal land. No split estate lands are located within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northernmost point in the WSA is the junction of an unnamed dirt road and Loretto Mine Road. The north boundary follows Loretto Mine Road southeast for seven miles, then cherrystems a portion of Eureka Valley Road and an unnamed road. The cherrystem is 18 miles long and extends to the Eureka Sand Dunes. The northern boundary then returns to Loretto Mine Road, which at Hanging Rock Canyon becomes Eureka Valley Road, and follows it for four miles until it meets an area disturbed by mineral extraction near Crater. Here the boundary bends sharply south for four miles and then north for three miles, running cross-country to avoid areas of disturbance. Following a series of section lines, the boundary juts east and north for three miles. The boundary then meets North Death Valley Road, following it southeast for seven miles until it passes near Little Sand Spring, where Death Valley Wash becomes the boundary. The boundary follows Death Valley Wash south for six miles until it meets the Death Valley National Monument (DVNM) boundary. The WSA border follows the DVNM boundary for 30 miles, four miles in a westerly direction, then south for 26 miles. Leaving the monument boundary, the WSA boundary veers southwest for five miles along a dirt road until it meets Saline Valley Road. The boundary follows Saline Valley Road west for eight miles and then north for two miles. There an intersecting dirt road becomes the boundary, which trends north for five miles. A cherrystem enters the WSA at this point and extends for six miles to the Upper Warm Springs area. The boundary then trends west for four and a half miles on another dirt road until it converges with Saline Valley Road. The boundary follows Saline Valley Road north for 22 miles until it meets a cherrystemmed road going to Jack Ass Flats, which intrudes into the WSA for eight miles. Leaving Saline Valley Road, the boundary trends west for two miles to the Inyo National Forest border, following it for one and a half miles. The boundary then follows Cowhorn Valley Road for two and a half miles, swinging west to meet Loretto Mine Road. It then follows Loretto Mine Road for six miles, leaving it near the Harlis and Broady Mine to exclude areas of mining activity. The boundary follows the access road for the Harlis and Broady Mine north six miles until it meets Loretto Mine Road completing the boundary at the northernmost portion of the WSA.

An important access route, the Saline-Eureka corridor, bisects the WSA from Upper Warm Springs to the Eureka Dunes. It is the only access available to the majority of the area and receives a considerable amount of motorized recreation use.

The Saline Valley WSA is composed of portions of Saline Valley, Eureka Valley, the Saline Range, Last Chance Range, and the Panamint Mountains. A prominent feature in the northern portion of the area is the Eureka Sand Dunes. The study area is diverse, containing a cross-section of Great Basin lowland and upland desert environments. The elevation ranges from approximately 1,050 feet on the valley floor to 8,674 feet at the summit of Dry Mountain. The climate is dry, with variable temperatures ranging from zero during the winter months to over 100 degrees in the summer. Plant communities of the WSA vary from sand dune (psammophytic) to Utah juniper-one leaf pinyon woodland, also including creosote bush scrub, allscale scrub, shadscale scrub, blackbrush scrub and hopsage scrub, and Joshua tree woodland.

Saline Valley Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) lies within the southwestern portion of the WSA, around the dry lake and salt lake of Saline Valley. The ACEC covers about 1,600 acres, or less than one percent of the WSA. The ACEC was designated to provide protective management for significant wildlife habitats including sand dune, mesquite thicket, meadow, and wetland; and prehistoric and historic cultural resources. The WSA also contains the Eureka Valley Dunes ACEC. This ACEC was designated to protect the Eureka Dunes Federally listed plant species and cultural resource values.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan (Use, Balanced, Protection, No Action). A second partial-wilderness recommendation was incorporated into the CDCA Plan in a 1982 plan amendment. This recommendation deleted a 1,010-acre area from the recommended wilderness, but was otherwise identical to the partial-wilderness recommendation analyzed in the CDCA Plan. The 1,010-acre area was deleted because it contains vehicle routes and other evidence of past mineral prospecting, it contains demonstrated mineral potential and is the subject of continuing industry interest.

2.	<u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> ---	401,602	acres recommended for wilderness
		58,084	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

Eighty-five percent suitable partial wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA, in accordance with the 1982 CDCA plan amendment. The 58,084 acres in this WSA recommended nonsuitable are released for uses other than wilderness. In addition to the Federal acreage recommended for wilderness, BLM recommends that 8,930 acres of State land and 29 acres of private land be acquired through exchange or purchase and designated as wilderness. With acquisition of these inholdings, a total of 401,602 acres are recommended for wilderness. Appendix 1 lists all inholdings and provides additional information on their acquisition. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The all-wilderness recommendation is environmentally preferable, because it would result in the least change to the existing natural environment over the long term. However, it is not the recommendation for this WSA, however, for the reasons described below.

The partial-wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the recommended wilderness is of large size and outstanding biological and geological diversity; (2) the recommended wilderness' outstanding naturalness, solitude, and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation outweigh its mineral values; (3) the northern portion of the WSA recommended for nonwilderness lacks wilderness qualities as a result of historic mining activities; and (4) solitude is disrupted by motor vehicle traffic in the southern area recommended for nonwilderness, which also has potential for geothermal development.

The WSA contains over 450,000 acres. It is the largest WSA within the lower 48 states and was rated as number one in wilderness values in the entire California Desert Conservation Area. Within the WSA, one can experience numerous desert ecosystems ranging from pinyon/juniper vegetation to creosote and salt flat xeric associations. Mountain ranges, bajadas, sand dunes, dry lakes, volcanic features, and precious surface water are all contained within the WSA. The suitability recommendation will preclude any further vehicular use of approximately 35 miles of primitive access routes of travel.

The recommended wilderness area possesses wilderness values which far exceed the criteria specified in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The area's naturalness is primeval; outstanding opportunities for solitude abound. The wilderness traveler can lose oneself in the deep valleys and mountains with their canyon recesses. The large Eureka Sand Dune complex, which is within the Eureka Valley Dunes ACEC, offers an environment constantly changing at the whim of the winds. The recommended wilderness provides not only an escape from the modern day world, but a challenge to the wilderness traveler. Primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities are limited only by a lack of water and the skill and stamina of the visitor. The boundaries on three sides are roads from which wilderness users can start at any point and explore as far as they dare. The middle of the WSA is a place where very few backpackers have traveled. It is a forbidding place with no water except for a few patches of snow in the winter.

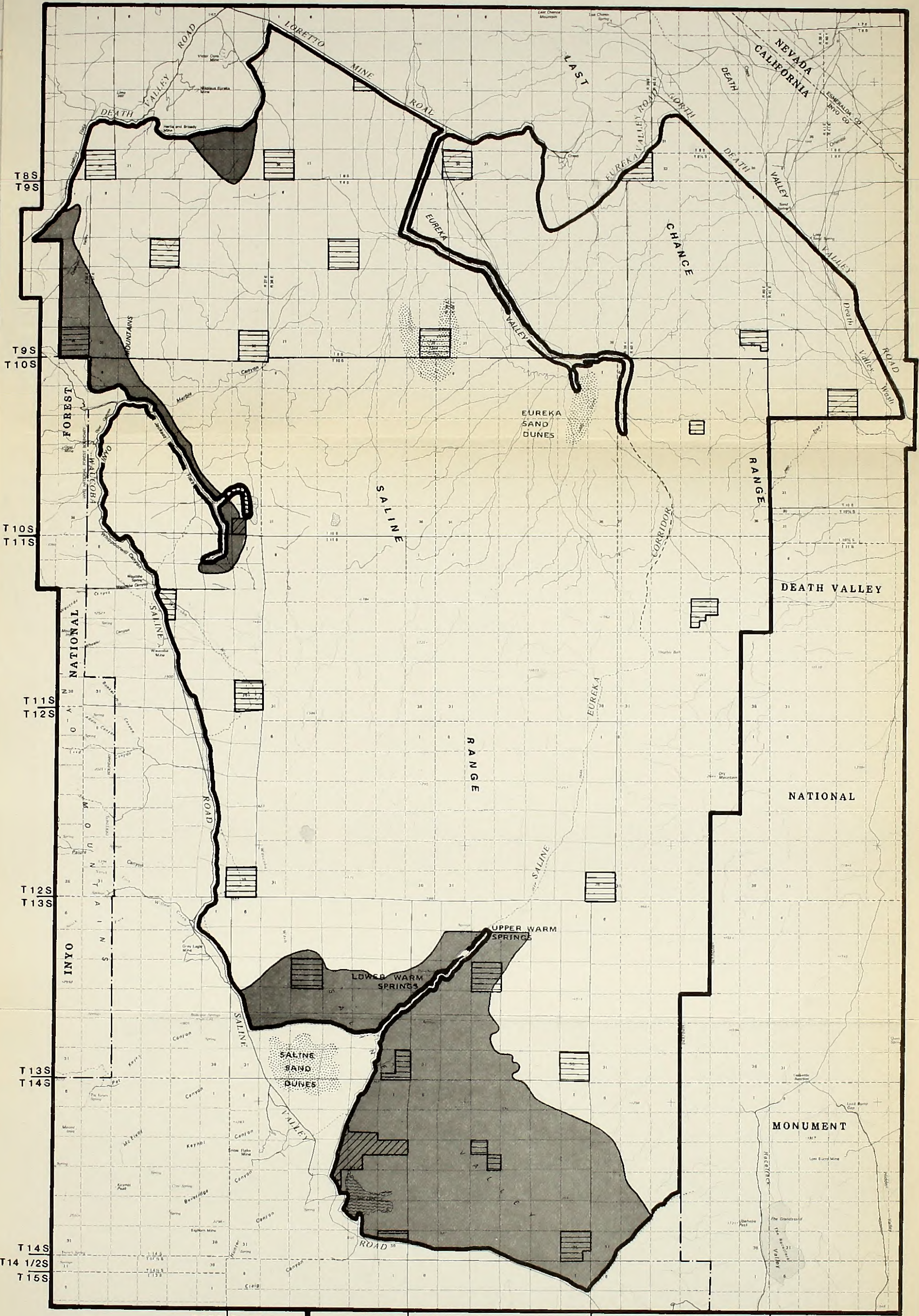
The recommended wilderness has areas of moderate to high mineral potential scattered throughout (See Energy and Mineral Resource Values). However, the area's superb wilderness qualities overshadow its value for mineral development.

The two northern parcels recommended for nonwilderness have been subjected to extensive mining activity, causing a loss of naturalness which also negatively affects opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

The southern area recommended for nonwilderness has not been impacted by mining activity. This area is natural, but consists mostly of flat playa and alluvial plains. This area consequently does not have the outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation that the recommended wilderness area does. Saline Valley Road adjoins its southern and southwestern borders, and vehicles traveling this road generate noise and dust which reduces the solitude of the area. Sights and sounds of man are distinguishable for miles along the flat playa and surrounding flat areas.

A known geothermal resource area (KGRA) is within the WSA, in both the recommended wilderness and the southern portion recommended for nonwilderness. The topography of the recommended nonwilderness is suitable for a generation plant site, with potential markets for the electricity nearby. The proposed action will allow geothermal development to occur in the recommended nonwilderness portion of the WSA, while ensuring protection of the area's special features within the Saline Valley ACEC.

In May 1988, the National Park Service (NPS) proposed adjustments to the Death Valley National Monument boundaries to improve the manageability of the Monument's borders and place natural areas and ecosystems divided by the current boundaries within a single agencies jurisdiction. A portion of this WSA was examined for this boundary adjustment in an EIS prepared by BLM, NPS, and the U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM). Based on this EIS, review of management and administrative needs, and public and agency review, approximately 35,300 acres of this WSA were proposed for transfer to the NPS.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

Saline Valley Proposal

MAP-1

0123

MILES

N

CDCA-117

JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	450,727
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		12,610
Private		1,360
Other Federal		4
Total		<u>464,701</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	392,643
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA) ¹	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA) ¹	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>392,643</u>
Inholdings ¹		
State		8,930
Private		29
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	58,084
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>58,084</u>

¹ Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Overall, the recommended wilderness portion of the WSA has outstanding primeval naturalness. The 25-mile long Saline Valley Corridor lies within the east-central portion of the recommended wilderness area. This corridor was made by the passage of vehicles and has had only minor improvements in the extreme northern section, where a dry waterfall has been partially cemented to provide safe passage for four-wheel drive vehicles.

Two small pockets recommended for nonwilderness lie in the northern portion of the WSA. Naturalness within these areas has been impacted by mining activity. In the recommended nonwilderness lands in the southern portion of the WSA, naturalness has been impacted around the three developed warm springs. Campers and sightseers have used this area frequently for over fifty years. Three air strips have been bladed into the desert surface around Lower Warm Springs.

2. Solitude: The massive size of the recommended wilderness area, 23 miles wide by 43 miles long, offers excellent opportunities for solitude. Covering approximately one-half of the WSA, the Saline Range is an island unto itself, with deep valleys at either end, smaller valleys within, and small natural sumps and playas which form pockets of outstanding solitude. The other mountain ranges within the WSA, with their high peaks and deep valleys, also offer the wilderness traveler the opportunity to get totally away from man's sights and sounds. The entire area recommended for wilderness offers excellent opportunities to feel as one with nature.

The northern area recommended for nonwilderness shows evidence of mining activity, which causes the wilderness user to lose the sense of solitude. The remaining southern area presents minimal opportunities for solitude due to the broad, flat aspect of Saline Valley. Dust and noise created by traffic on Saline Valley Road is evident for miles across the valley.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The variety of landforms provide an array of recreational opportunities, with mountain ranges, large valleys, sand dunes, playas, erosional features, and other natural features all waiting to be explored. The scarcity of potable water is a limiting factor within the area. Water can be

obtained just outside the west WSA boundary from small streams which cascade down from the Inyo Mountains, and from artesian wells within adjacent areas, but little water can be found within the interior of the WSA.

Primitive recreational opportunities within the northern recommended nonwilderness portion of the WSA are lessened by the mining activity of the past, which has left numerous scars on the landscape. Within the southern recommended nonwilderness portion of the WSA, surface evidence in the form of routes of travel, bladed airstrips and developed warm springs reduce the quality of the primitive recreation experience.

4. Special Features: As previously discussed, the WSA contains the Saline Valley ACEC. In addition, one of the landmarks within the WSA is the Eureka Dunes, which at 687 feet high are the second tallest dunes in the continental United States. The dune system offers star-shaped dunes, concave dunes, and sand mountain dune formations. The Eureka Dunes are designated as a National Natural Landmark. The dunes are within a portion of the Eureka Valley Dunes ACEC.

Three unusual plant assemblages are located within the WSA. The Eureka Valley Joshua Tree Forest is partially within the study area. The other two, the Eureka Dunes, and Last Chance Range calciphyte association (plants which are associated with limestone outcrops), are wholly contained within the WSA. This WSA is one of the richest areas for rare plants in the entire CDCA. Most of the plants are located in the immediate vicinity of the Eureka Dunes and Last Chance Range. The CDCA's only Federally listed plant species are found on the Eureka Dunes; the Eureka Dunes evening primrose (*Oenothera avita* ssp. *eurekensis*) and Eureka Dune grass (*Swallenia alexandrae*).

Desert bighorn sheep range extensively in this area. Major concentrations occur in the Last Chance Range and the Saline Range. Three bighorn sheep guzzlers within the WSA provide water for this herd.

Historic and prehistoric cultural resources are found throughout the WSA, which holds significance to present-day Native Americans as well. Because of the vastness and diversity of this unit, a full inventory or survey has not been conducted. Known sites include prehistoric villages, rock art, seasonal camps, historic mines and mining camps, and pioneer habitation sites. Most sites are currently in excellent condition due to their inaccessibility.

The Saline Valley corridor is a route of travel approximately 25 miles long created by the passage of vehicles which enables an off-highway vehicle traveler to enter the heart of the largest WSA within the CDCA. This route of travel is challenging and provides a unique recreation experience for the user.

A stable burro herd of approximately 25-head is managed within Saline Valley. The herd will be maintained at this population level.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 359,787 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush, 45,470 acres of the American Desert/Saltbush-Greasewood, and 45,470 acres of the American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland ecosystems. The recommended suitable portion of the Saline Valley WSA would significantly add to the American Desert/Saltbush-Greasewood Ecosystem of the NWPS. The WSA is a land of outstanding ecological diversity.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	3,904,148
American Desert/Saltbush- Greasewood	0	0	7	204,239
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	24	661,641
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,290,344
American Desert/Saltbush- Greasewood	0	0	7	204,239
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	16	440,390

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is not within a five-hour drive of any major population centers.

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of seven BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is John Muir, 25 miles west of the area.

C. Manageability

The Saline Valley WSA is manageable as wilderness. The vastness of the WSA gives the area excellent opportunities for wilderness management. Manageability of the recommended wilderness area could be greatly enhanced through acquisition of valid existing rights of unpatented mining claims. Acquisition of these valid rights would ensure that wilderness values could be protected and maintained at their existing level. Significant portions of the recommended wilderness area have moderate to high potential for gold, silver, mercury, pozzolan, copper, lead, zinc, talc, or molybdenum (for detail see the section of this report entitled "Energy and Mineral Resource Values"). The recommended suitable portion of the WSA has 418 mining claims. In view of the area's mineral potential, it is likely that some of these claims would withstand a validity examination, making their development possible. Wilderness values will decline if future mineral development occurs.

The Saline Valley Corridor in the eastern portion of the study area is the only vehicle route which extends all the way through the WSA from north to south. The corridor has been used for many years by off-highway vehicle enthusiasts touring the area, and provides important access for primitive recreation as well. Without the Saline Valley Corridor, the WSA's extremely large size and lack of water would prevent most primitive recreationists from ever reaching the interior. Use of the corridor has not had an adverse impact on the wilderness values of the surrounding lands; the rugged terrain has confined vehicles to the corridor and kept them from penetrating further into the WSA's interior. After studying the effects of its usage, BLM designated the corridor as an approved route of travel. The corridor should remain open to permitted and controlled motorized vehicle use as a traditional means of access to this large area.

Parcels of State land are scattered throughout the recommended area. To assure maintenance of wilderness values, it will be necessary to acquire these inholdings.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Saline Valley is located in the BLM Saline Valley, Saline Range, and Last Chance Mountains Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Areas (GRAs). Prior to publication

of the CDCA Plan, BLM prepared a G-E-M Report for these GRAs. However, the CDCA Plan did not fully analyze and interpret the GRA Reports as they specifically relate to this WSA. The GRA Reports show the WSA to have high potential for gold, silver, lead, salt, and borates, based on past production of these commodities. In addition, an unqualified potential was assigned to portions of the study area for sulphur, geothermal, uranium, lithium, quartz sand, gold, silver, lead, copper, tungsten, manganese, chromium, cinder, clay, talc, and sand and gravel. As of December 12, 1979, there were 16 unpatented mining claims in the WSA recorded with BLM.

The following is a summary of the 1980 BLM GRA reports. The Marble Canyon area in the western part of the WSA was classified as having a high potential for the occurrence of gold. The extreme northwestern part of the WSA was classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold, copper, tungsten, and talc. Lead and silver production from an undetermined amount of ore (11.6% lead, eight oz/ton silver) was documented from mines and prospects west of Jackass Flats in the western part of the WSA. This area was classified as having a high potential for the occurrence of lead and silver. The area to the southwest of Crater, adjacent to the northern boundary of the WSA, was classified as having a high potential for the occurrence of sulphur, gypsum, and mercury based on past production (13,000 tons of sulphur through 1951) and known occurrences of these minerals. An area in the southeastern part of the WSA, at the south end of the Last Chance Range, was classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of base metals such as copper and molybdenum based on geochemical anomalies and geologic environment associated with other deposits of this type in the region. An area in the southern part of the WSA, surrounding a bedded manganese deposit, was classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of manganese. In addition, scattered areas throughout the WSA were classified as having low potential for precious-base metals, uranium, and talc deposits.

The southern part of the Eureka Valley, located in the north central part of the WSA, was classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium and lithium. A significant geochemical anomaly and a favorable geologic environment (closed alluvial basin) provided the basis for the BLM classification.

The 1980 BLM GRA reports cited a U.S. Geological Survey (USGS, Conservation Division, 1979) classification of the southern part of the area surrounding Warm Springs as a Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA) as the basis for a high occurrence potential for geothermal resources in this part of the WSA. The area surrounding the KGRA was classified by the USGS as prospectively valuable for geothermal resources and therefore classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources based on the BLM classification system.

The USGS also classified the area surrounding the Salt Lake, located in the extreme southwestern part of the WSA, as having known value for sodium and potassium. Based on this classification and known past production of halite and borates from Salt Lake, the southern part of the WSA was classified as having a high potential for the occurrence of sodium, potassium, and borates.

The Saline Range is composed of volcanic rock types. The BLM GRA report assigned a low potential for the occurrence of cinder, pumice, industrial rock, and borate deposits to the central part of the WSA encompassed by the Saline Range. In addition, the alluvial valleys and fans provide a favorable geologic environment for the accumulation of sand, gravel, and clay but were classified as having a low potential for the occurrence of these commodities.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: From 1981 through 1983, the U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) and USGS conducted independent mineral surveys of the BLM recommended suitable portion of the WSA. The results of both surveys were incorporated into a joint USGS/BOM report (Open File Report OFR 84-560) published by the USGS in 1984. The following is a summary of the USGS/BOM combined report.

The BOM examined 39 mines and prospects in the BLM recommended suitable portion of the WSA and documented occurrences of gold, silver, lead, copper, tungsten, uranium, sulphur, mercury, lithium, manganese, molybdenum, gypsum, sodium, potassium, borates, talc, and identified potential for industrial minerals such as silica, sand, gravel, feldspar, crushed rock, and pumice. The northern portion of the Saline Valley WSA was classified as having a high potential for the occurrence of gold in the vicinity of Crater and in Marble Canyon. Marble Canyon, downstream from the high potential area, was classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold. Seven areas, scattered from the Inyo Mountains to the Last Chance Range, were classified as having low potential for the occurrence of gold. An area of granitic rock surrounded by limestone and dolomite in the southern part of the WSA was classified as having a low potential for the occurrence of copper, molybdenum, lead, silver, and zinc. The western part of the WSA near Jackass Flats was classified as having a low potential for the occurrence of lead, silver, and zinc based on past production of lead and geochemical anomalies. The northern part of the WSA, surrounding the high gold potential area, was classified as having a low potential for the occurrence of mercury.

The southern part of the Eureka Valley was classified as having a low potential for the occurrence of uranium and lithium. The USGS cited past production of sulphur from the Crater area, but did not

assign a classification to similar geologic terrain within the WSA. The northwestern part of the WSA was identified as having a low potential for the talc resources despite the known occurrence of producing talc mines just outside the WSA boundary in the same vicinity.

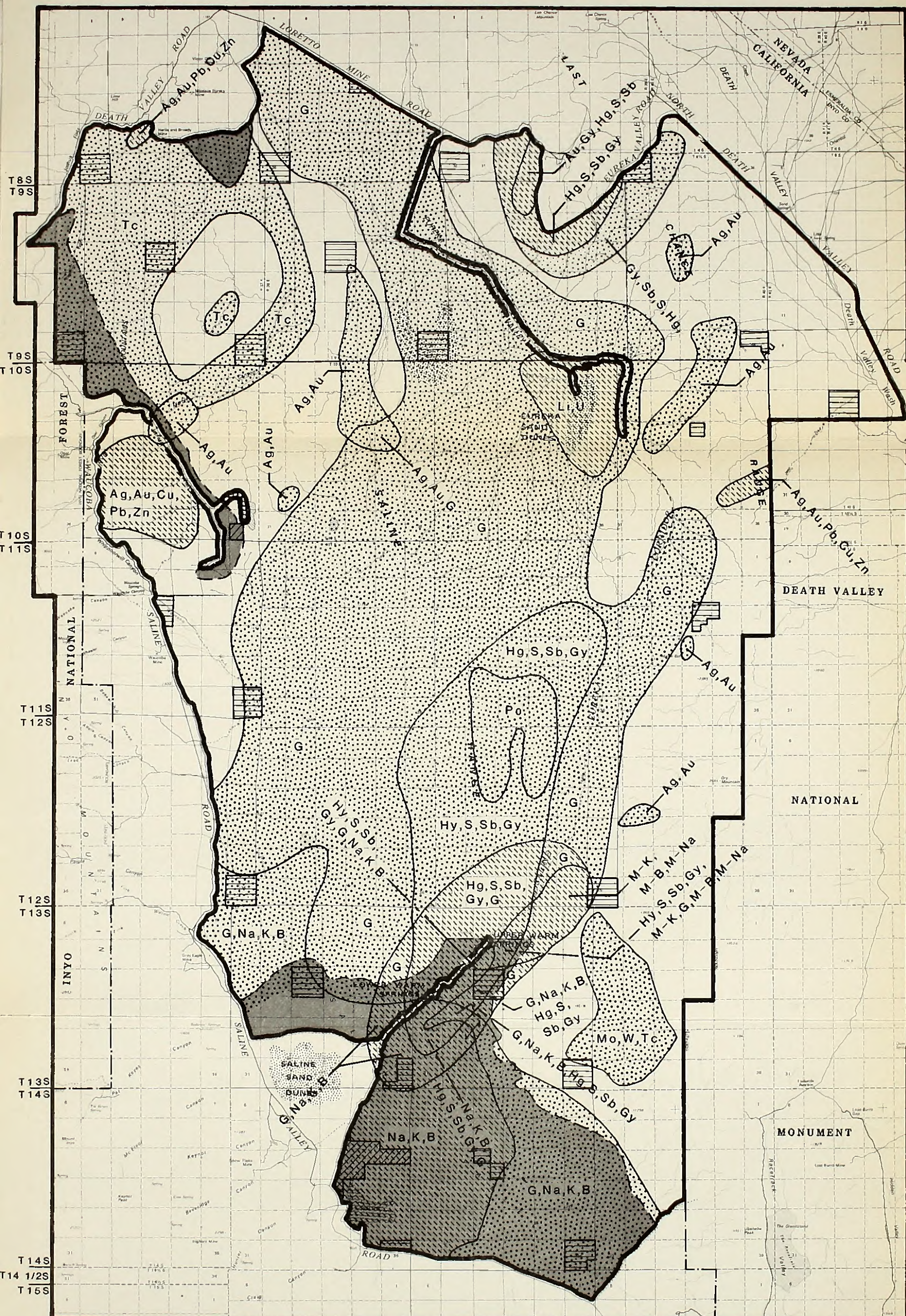
The USGS report did not identify the occurrence potential of sodium, potassium, borate, geothermal, and other industrial mineral deposits such as sand, gravel, clay, and pumice within the WSA. In general, the USGS/BOM combined report supported the 1980 BLM GRA study in the identification of areas with potential for the occurrence of mineral resources. However, the USGS assigned a lower occurrence potential to many of the areas in relation to the potential assigned by the BOM Mineral Land Assessment and the BLM GRA study.

The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) provided comments and submitted additional information supplementing the USGS/BOM combined report. The following is a summary of the CDMG report which proposes changes in the mineral potential of the WSA as assessed by USGS.

The northwestern portion of the WSA was classified as having a high potential for the occurrence of talc, and was identified as having a geologic environment favorable for accumulations of precious and base metals, tungsten, molybdenum, and wollastonite. The northern part of the WSA in the Crater vicinity and the isolated areas identified by USGS as having a low potential for precious metals, were proposed to be reclassified as having a moderate to high potential for the occurrence of epithermal type deposits. CDMG identified the minerals associated with this type of deposit as precious metals, mercury, sulfur, antimony, and gypsum.

Geothermal potential was also addressed in the CDMG comments. The southern part of the WSA was classified as having a moderate to high potential for geothermal resources based on the presence of a young, volcanic terrain, anomalous high temperatures in temperature test holes, evidence of surface hydrothermal alteration (calcerous scinter, and mercury), and surface thermal features such as hot springs. Geothermal potential was not addressed in the USGS/BOM combined report; however, the CDMG classification generally agrees with the 1980 BLM GRA classification.

Numerous industrial mineral commodities ignored in the USGS/BOM studies were classified by CDMG. Much of the eastern part of the WSA is underlain by limestone and dolomite outcropping in the Last Chance Range. CDMG recommended that a high potential for the occurrence of these commodities be assigned to this region; however, based on the BLM classification system, a low occurrence potential must be assigned due to the remote likelihood of development of these deposits in the near future. CDMG recommended

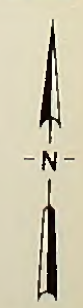
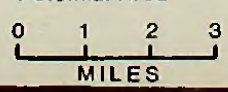


- Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

- Explanation**
- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
 - Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
 - M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
 - H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

- Commodity Symbols**
- Ag Silver
 - Au Gold
 - B Boron
 - Cu Copper
 - G Geothermal
 - Gy Gypsum
 - Hg Mercury
 - K Potassium
 - Li Lithium
 - Mo Molybdenum
 - Na Sodium
 - Pb Lead
 - Po Pozzolan
 - S Sulfur
 - Sb Antimony
 - Tc Talc
 - U Uranium
 - W Tungsten
 - Zn Zinc

Saline Valley
Mineral Resource Potential



that the south-central portion of the WSA be classified as having a high potential for the occurrence of pozzolan, based on surface exposures and mining claims located in that area.

CDMG reclassified the southern part of the Eureka Valley in the north-central part of the WSA as having a high potential for the occurrence of uranium and lithium based on a confirmed geologic environment (drill hole log) and a geochemical anomaly as documented by the USGS/BOM. In addition, CDMG recommended that the entire central portion of the WSA be classified as having a low to moderate potential for the occurrence of zeolites. Map 2 is a composite of the 1980 BLM GRA report, the USGS/BOM study, and CDMG recommended changes standardized to the BLM classification system.

Since 1980, two plans of operation for mineral exploration in Eureka and Saline Valleys have been received by the BLM Ridgecrest Resource Area office. The Eureka Valley plan proposed a drilling program for borate deposits. Drilling was completed in December 1987, but results from the program have not been made public. The Saline Valley plan addresses an ongoing exploration and development program for pozzolan claims located in the Last Chance Range.

Mineral interest in the WSA is further indicated by the following BLM records dated January, 1988.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	223	0	223	4,460	0	4,460
Placer	187	2	189	7,480	80	7,560
Mill Site	8	0	8	40	0	40
Total	418	2	420	11,980	80	12,060

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: In the 85% of the WSA to be designated wilderness, management will focus on maintaining the area's high quality wilderness values. However, values may be lost in areas of moderate to high mineral potential through development of valid existing claims. On the 15% of the WSA to remain nonwilderness, wilderness values will decline as a result of mineral and geothermal exploration and development.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Eighty-five percent of the WSA will be withdrawn from mineral entry. Development of the 418 existing claims will be subject to proof of a valid discovery. In the 15% of the WSA to remain nonwilderness, mineral exploration and development can continue subject to regulations stated in 43 CFR 3809 regarding surface disturbance, as well as any additional constraints stated in the CDCA Plan.

3. Impact on Geothermal Exploration and Development: No new geothermal leases will be issued within the recommended wilderness area, approximately 60% of which has moderate geothermal potential. In addition, about half of an estimated 29,000-acre area of high geothermal potential is within the recommended wilderness. The nonwilderness portions of the WSA will remain available for geothermal leasing. The southern nonwilderness portion contains the other half of the area of high potential mentioned above, and its entire remaining acreage has moderate geothermal potential.
4. Impact on Federally Listed Plant Species: Protection of habitat for Federally listed species will be enhanced by wilderness designation. Under nonwilderness, these species will not be affected, as they will be protected by Federal law and BLM regulations.
5. Impact on Native American Values: Native American values will be enhanced by, although Native Americans will no longer be able to drive to sites of spiritual values and plant and food resources within the wilderness area. Native American access will be unaffected within the nonwilderness portion of the area.
6. Impact on Cultural Resources: Sites within the recommended wilderness area will be protected from surface disturbance, although this beneficial impact will be offset somewhat by restrictions on scientific excavations.
7. Impact on Off-Highway Vehicle Travel: Opportunities for off-highway vehicle traffic would be adversely affected by wilderness designation. Vehicle travel within the nonsuitable portion of the area would not be affected and vehicles would be allowed to travel on designated routes within this portion of the WSA.
8. Impact on the Saline Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Corridor: Opportunities for using the Saline Valley Corridor as vehicle access into the area will be eliminated under wilderness designation.
9. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep Habitat: The habitat for this species will be preserved in its natural condition.
10. Impact on Eureka Dunes National Natural Landmark: The national natural landmark will be fully within the wilderness area, where it will be preserved in a natural condition.
11. Impact on Unusual Plant Assemblages: Of the WSA's three unusual plant assemblages (UPAs), two will be within the wilderness area, where they will be maintained in their natural condition. The third UPA, the Eureka Valley Joshua Tree Forest, is only partially within the recommended wilderness. The portion outside the wilderness will continue to be managed and protected according to the guidelines provided in the CDCA Plan.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Numerous respondents were interested in this area, particularly in the criteria of roadlessness. New information was presented which led to several field reviews and refinements in inventory data.
2. Study Phase: Of the 78 comments received, a slight majority favored wilderness designation. Scenic quality was by far the most commonly expressed value, with the Eureka Dunes often cited. Protection of vegetation from grazing, burros and motorized vehicles was also frequently discussed. Educational, geologic, historic, cultural, and scientific values were also mentioned. The area was declared to be outstanding for primitive recreation, such as multi-day backpacking and camping. Proximity to U.S. Forest Service RARE II lands was perceived to be a factor which would improve the area's management as wilderness.

The hot springs (Lower, Middle, and Upper Warm Springs) were the subject of conflicting viewpoints. Those favoring wilderness designation wanted protection for the springs and surrounding vegetation and wildlife. Those opposed to wilderness wanted vehicle access to the hot springs for recreational enjoyment.

Respondents opposing wilderness designation feared that mineral or geothermal development would be limited or that recreational pursuits such as hunting and camping would be restricted. Motorized access to the hot springs and petroglyphs was desired. Some felt that the presence of air traffic adversely affected the wilderness quality of the area.

Thirteen comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). Many favored designation of the area as wilderness or restriction of motorized vehicle use. There were requests for both closing and opening the corridor between the Saline and Eureka Dunes. Concern was expressed about trespass

activities around the Warm Springs. Two letters strongly opposed closing the area to vehicles. It was also suggested that insufficient consideration had been given to multiple use of the area.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: Comments in response to the Draft CDCA Plan alternatives repeated many of the issues covered above. Many expressed the need to protect wilderness and control vehicle routes. Others stated that exploration and development of minerals, oil and gas, and geothermal resources were the best use of the area. It was suggested that areas with talc deposits should be eliminated from wilderness consideration.
4. Proposed Plan: A large number of respondents advocated extending the southwest boundary of the area recommended for wilderness to include the entire valley floor, in order to encompass a complete ecosystem and provide manageable boundaries. A substantial, but smaller, number of letters requested that access to the hot springs be left open so that recreation could continue as in the past.

The trail from the Eureka Dunes to Saline Valley was mentioned by several vehicle users who wanted it to be opened to off-highway vehicles (OHV). Others wanted it closed or open in only one direction. The National Outdoor Coalition, an association of more than a dozen mining and OHV clubs, favored wilderness recommendation for a substantial portion of the area recommended for wilderness, but wanted the Eureka-Saline corridor and a few potential mining areas omitted.

5. Plan Amendments, 1982: An amendment proposed by the County of Inyo changed the Multiple Use Class of a two-square-mile area in the northern part of the WSA near the Victor Cons mine from Class "C" to Class "M." The amendment was approved.

Nineteen letters addressed this amendment, seven in favor, eleven in opposition and one was neutral. No rationale was given for favoring the change. Those in opposition, which included six organizations and the California Department of Resources, pointed out the low to medium mineral potential of the area and the absence of a need for the amendment.

APPENDIX 1
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION
SALINE VALLEY WSA (CDCA-117)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				TOTAL ACREAGE	NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	
	TWNSHP	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN			SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)
1	8S.	37E.	36	MDM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
2	8S.	38E.	16	MDM	160	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
3	8S.	38E.	36	MDM	480	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
4	8S.	39E.	36	MDM	360	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
5	9S.	37E.	16	MDM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
6	9S.	37E.	36	MDM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
7	9S.	38E.	16	MDM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
8	9S.	38E.	36	MDM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
9	9S.	40E.	25	MDM	360	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
10	10S.	41E.	16	MDM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
11	10S.	40E.	15	MDM	160	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
12	11S.	37E.	16	MDM	320	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
13	11S.	37E.	36	MDM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
14	11S.	40E.	10	MDM	120	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
15	11S.	40E.	11	MDM	40	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
16	11S.	40E.	14	MDM	60	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
17	11S.	40E.	15	MDM	280	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
18	12S.	37E.	36	MDM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
19	12S.	39E.	36	MDM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0

These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.

Lower Saline Valley

CDCA 117A

LOWER SALINE VALLEY WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-117A)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

6,638 acres

Lower Saline Valley WSA is located in Inyo County in the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest rural communities are Lone Pine, 20 miles to the west and Big Pine, 30 miles northwest. There are no major metropolitan areas within 100 miles. The WSA includes 6,418 of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and 220 acres of State land. There are no split estate or private lands within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northwest boundary of the Lower Saline Valley WSA is a mining access road. Saline Valley Road and the Lippincott Mine Road, respectively, form the western and southern borders. Death Valley National Monument (DVNM) forms the eastern border of the WSA.

The WSA contains approximately 25% mountains, 25% alluvial fans, 20% dissected fans, 20% highly dissected fans, and 10% plains. The terrain varies from flat and rolling on the west to rough and mountainous on the east. Elevations vary from a low of 1,422 feet in the northwestern corner to a high of 3,560 feet along the eastern border. The WSA contains the typical creosote bush scrub vegetative assemblage that exhibits some variability based on elevation.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

2,154	acres recommended for wilderness
4,264	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

Partial wilderness (approximately 31% suitable) is the recommendation for the Lower Saline Valley WSA. BLM recommends that 2,154 acres be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). The other 4,264 acres in this WSA recommended nonsuitable are released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

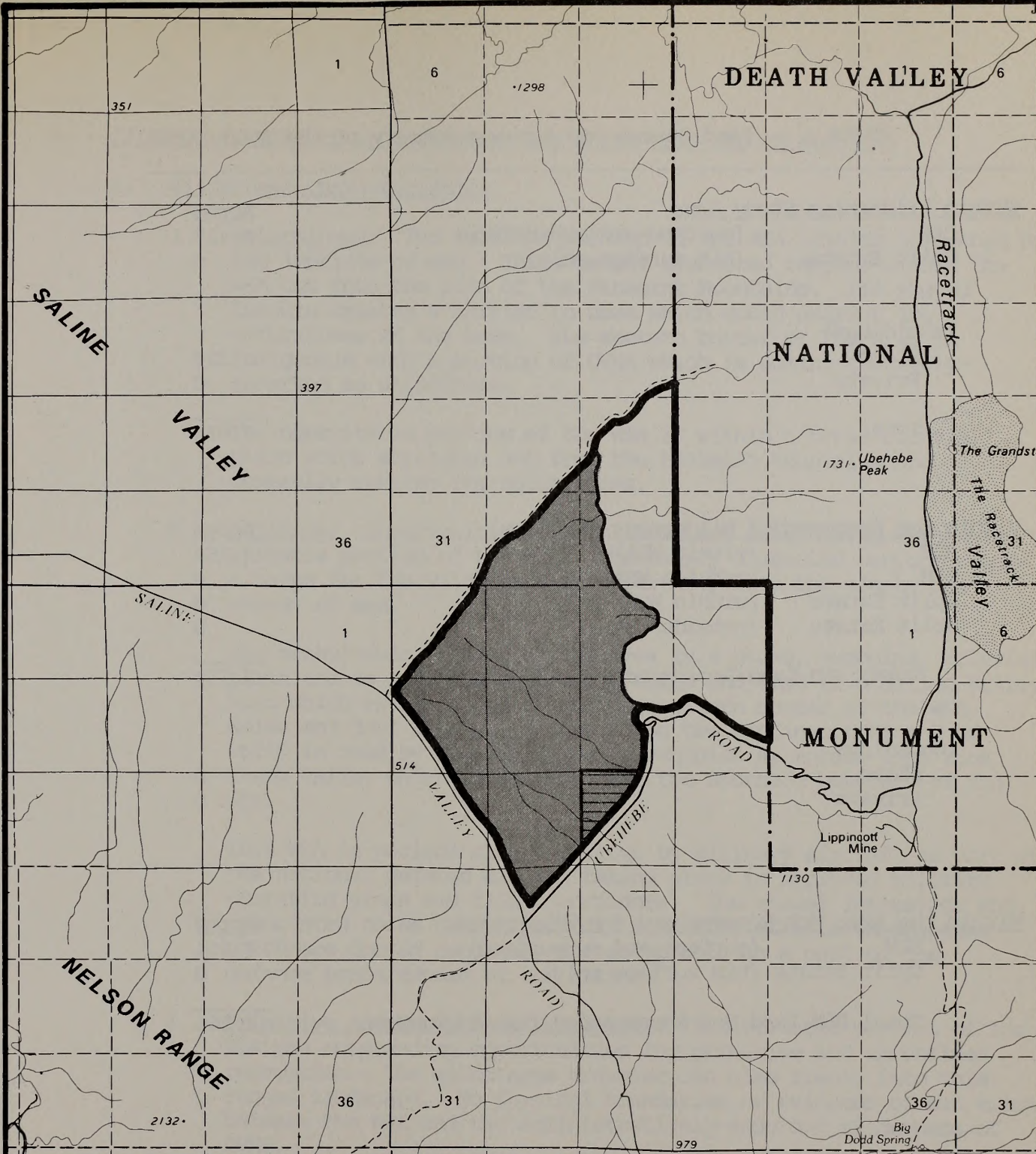
The recommended suitable portion illustrates wilderness character that exemplifies the criteria outlined in the Wilderness Act of 1964. This area contains a rugged extension of the Panamint Mountains and is contiguous with administratively-endorsed wilderness in DVNM. The suitable portion is primeval with no appreciable imprints of man to degrade the naturalness of the area. When evaluated in conjunction with the values adjacent in DVNM, the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The supplemental values of cultural resources and desert bighorn sheep add to the qualities of the area.

The suitable portion of the rugged northern Panamint Mountains have been primarily affected by the forces of nature. The rugged nature precludes vehicular access and provides a challenge to the wilderness user, testing his wilderness skills. No natural boundary exists between the suitable portion of the WSA and the administratively-endorsed wilderness of Death Valley National Monument. Solitude is outstanding within the area's deep canyons where the outside sights and sounds of man do not permeate. No primitive routes of travel have been identified within the WSA.

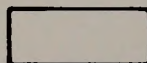


Resource conflicts within the suitable portion of the area are moderate. A small portion in the southeast corner of the WSA has a high potential for gold and lead. The remainder of the suitable area has a moderate potential for sodium, gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, tungsten, molybdenum and talc.


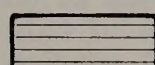
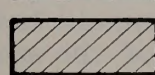
The nonsuitable portion of the area is not recommended for designation as wilderness because of high potential for geothermal energy values along with moderate potential for sodium, potassium, gold, silver, copper, lead, molybdenum, tungsten, zinc and talc resources. Wilderness values are not as outstanding in the nonsuitable portion.

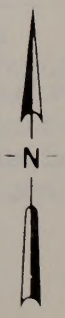
Other resources located within the area include Native American values and cultural resources indicative of aboriginal plant collecting and harvesting.



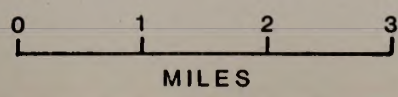
T 14 S
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-  RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
-  RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS
-  LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

-  SPLIT ESTATE
-  STATE
-  PRIVATE



**Lower Saline Valley
Proposal
MAP-1**



CDCA-117A
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	6,418
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings ¹		
State		220
Private		0
Total		<u>6,638</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	2,154
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>2,154</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	4,264
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>4,264</u>

¹Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The suitable portion of the WSA remains untouched by the imprints of man. Three deeply dissected canyons within the WSA cut into the side of the Panamint Mountains. Its rugged terrain creates a barrier to uses which could degrade the naturalness of the area. The eastern border of the area is indigenous with a portion of DVNM which is administratively-endorsed as wilderness.

The nonsuitable portion of the WSA is within a broad alluvial plain which stretches out from the Panamint Mountains and generally retains its naturalness.

2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude are outstanding within the suitable portion of the WSA. The deeply dissected canyons create a haven for the wilderness traveler away from the sights and sounds of man.

The nonsuitable portion of the area is a broad, sweeping, alluvial plain and is affected by traffic noise and dust from Saline Valley Road which exists along the entire western border of the WSA. Noise and dust is also created along the Lippincott Mine Road which is used by four-wheel drive vehicles as access into Race Track Valley which is in DVNM near the southern boundary of the WSA.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The suitable portion of the WSA has outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The wilderness traveler can hike freely into this rugged landscape. No physical boundaries or evidence of man exist between the WSA and the administratively-endorsed wilderness of DVNM.

The nonsuitable portion of the WSA has opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation although they are less outstanding than those within the suitable portion of the WSA. The broad, sweeping, alluvial plain allows for primitive and unconfined recreation but is of a lesser quality than the rugged aspects of the suitable area.

4. Special Features: The area is used by the Death Valley Shoshone and the Owens Valley Paiute Indians for plant collecting and harvesting. Some pinyon trees are found within the nonsuitable portion of the WSA. Native American values exist within both the suitable and nonsuitable portions of the WSA.

A herd of approximately 65 desert bighorn sheep, a BLM sensitive species, utilize the WSA as permanent range and habitat.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 6,418 acres of the American Desert Province/Creosote Bush ecosystem. This is a ubiquitous ecosystem found throughout most of the Mojave Desert and would not add any new or adverse aspects to the NWPS. However, this is one of the outstanding examples of creosote bush vegetation found within the California desert.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification <u>Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,743	117	4,261,491
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,743	88	3,647,687

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is not within a five-hour drive of any major population centers.
3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of eleven BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is the Golden Trout Wilderness area, managed by the Forest Service, 40 miles west of the area.

C. Manageability

The Lower Saline Valley WSA is manageable as wilderness. Management of the suitable area is enhanced by the adjacent DVNM which has been administratively endorsed for wilderness.

The nonsuitable portion of the extreme western part of the area has moderate potential for gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, molybdenum, tungsten, talc, sodium and potassium. A high potential for geothermal energy is also found within the western nonsuitable area.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Lower Saline Valley WSA (CDCA 117A) is located in the BLM Saline Valley Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M data in the Wilderness Section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 indicated that the resource data for this WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated and interpreted. G-E-M data indicated in the EIS that the recommended nonsuitable western portion of the WSA had a moderate potential for the occurrence of sodium, potassium and geothermal energy, and an undetermined but possibly favorable potential for the occurrence of metallics, nonmetallic and salable minerals. There were no unpatented mining claims as of December 12, 1979.

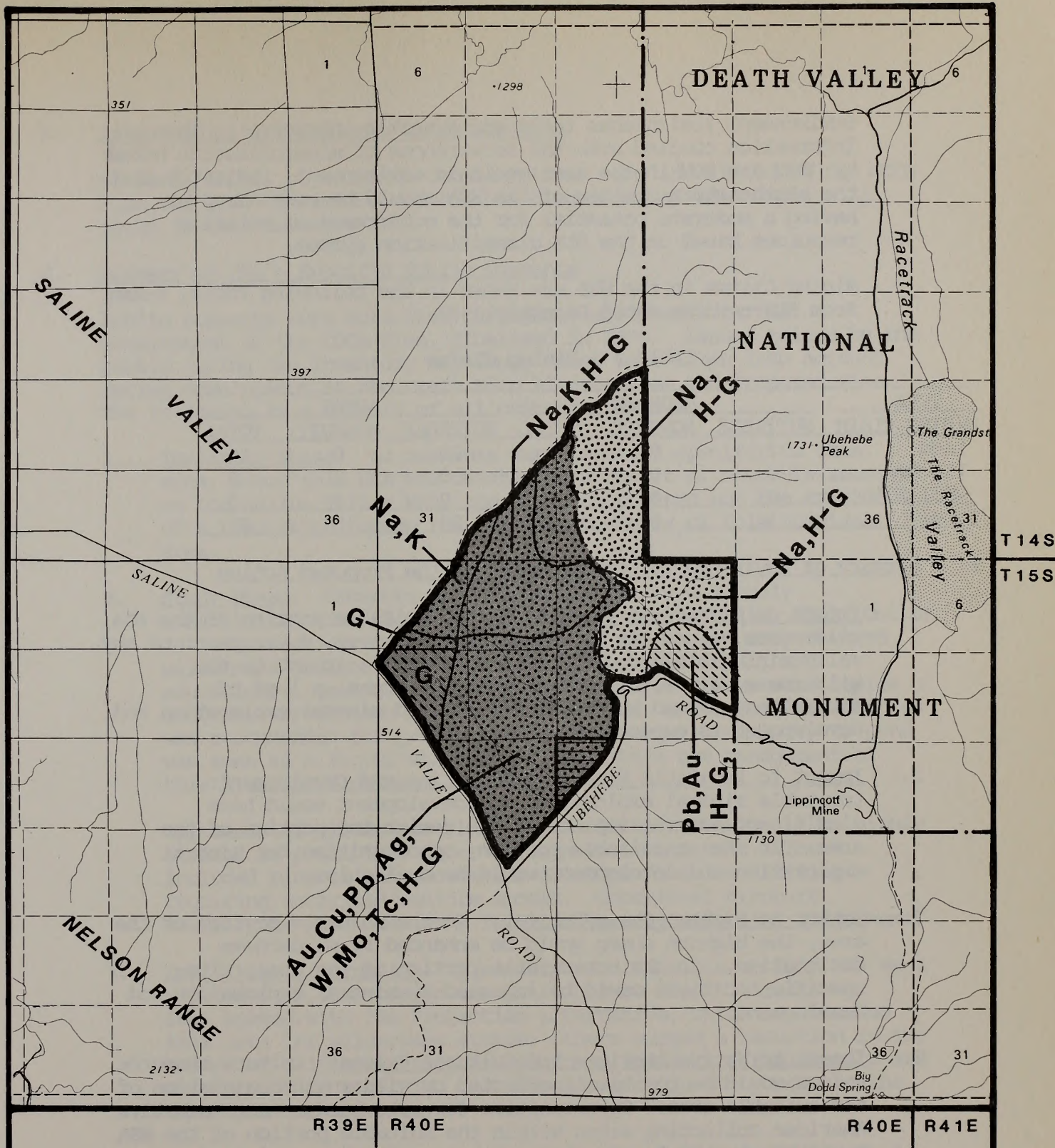
In 1980, except for leasable minerals, there was insufficient data to fully classify the WSA for the potential for occurrence of metallic, nonmetallic and salable minerals. A small area in the southeast corner of the BLM recommended-suitable portion of the WSA was classified as high potential for the occurrence of lead and gold, as shown on the accompanying map. This is based on a favorable geologic environment similar to the area around the Lippincott lead mine immediately to the southeast of the WSA. The northern half of the recommended suitable area, encumbering the late Paleozoic marine sediments, may be a favorable geologic environment for nonmetallic minerals but there was insufficient data to classify the mineral resource potential.

The central portion of the suitable and northwestern portion of the WSA, primarily the areas of alluvium, had a high prospective potential for the occurrence of sodium minerals based on the classification by U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Although the file did not report the date of this classification, the 1980 GRA file did classify the northwestern portion of the WSA as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of sodium and potassium

based on the USGS classification. The GRA files indicated that USGS, in January 1979, classified the entire Saline Valley, including all but the eastern quarter of the WSA, as a Potential Geothermal Resource Area (PGRA). The 1979 USGS classification also identified a thermal spring (temperature averaging 37.8 degrees Celsius), and the Saline Valley Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA) located approximately seven miles to the northwest of the WSA. GRA file data in 1980 classified the same alluvial area covered by the PGRA as a high potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources, and favorable for plant citing. The rest of the WSA was not classified due to insufficient data. The file indicated that the alluvium in the western one third of the WSA was a favorable geologic environment for potentially the occurrence of common mineral materials (e.g., sand and gravel, rock products), but there was insufficient data to classify the potential for occurrence.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: Between 1981 and 1983, both the Bureau of Mines (BOM) and the USGS conducted mineral surveys of the suitable portions of the WSA. In 1984, the results of the BOM survey was published in preliminary report, MLA 1-84. During 1984, the results of the BOM survey and the USGS survey results were incorporated in the joint BOM/USGS Open File Report (OFR) 84-560. The BOM report (MLA-1-84) indicated that the nonsuitable portion of the WSA was located within the Ubehebe Mining District which was reported to have produced gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc from at least 4,788 tons of ore. No production was known from the suitable portion of the WSA. At the Bonanza prospect in the extreme southeastern portion of the suitable area, the USGS and BOM report indicated that the replacement deposits in marble (skarn deposits) in contact with granitic intrusive rocks contained copper, gold, silver, tungsten and uranium; no production was reported. The Blue Jay (Jarosite) Mine, located approximately one-half mile to the east of the northeastern corner of the WSA, was reported by the USGS and BOM to have produced 20 tons of ore in 1915 which yielded 4,000 pounds of copper and 1,199 ounces of silver from a skarn deposit which also contains molybdenum. The joint report of the USGS and BOM indicated that the recommended suitable portion of the WSA is considered to have no identifiable potential for the occurrence of copper, gold, silver, tungsten, and uranium. No classification for sodium, potassium, oil and gas, or geothermal resources was made by the USGS or BOM for the WSA.

The public comment received by the BLM in response to OFR 84-560 from the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) in a letter dated December 1, 1985 indicated that all of the WSA, except for the extreme western corner, should be classified as moderate potential for gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, molybdenum, tungsten and talc on the basis the favorable geologic



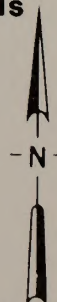
- Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

Explanation

- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- Ag** Silver
- Au** Gold
- Cu** Copper
- G** Geothermal
- K** Potassium
- Mo** Molybdenum
- Na** Sodium
- Pb** Lead
- Tc** Talic
- W** Tungsten
- Zn** Zinc



**Lower Saline Valley
Mineral Resource Potential**

0 1 2 3
MILES

**MAP-2
CDCA-117A**

environment (calcareous rocks and granitic intrusive). This new information coupled with the occurrences of mineralization noted by USGS and BOM in the same geologic environment, indicates that the southeastern quarter of the WSA should be considered as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of metallic resources based on the BLM classification system.

Mining Claims in the WSA are shown in the following Table, taken from BLM records dated December 1987.

Table 3 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	1	0	1	20	0	20
Placer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mill Site	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	0	1	20	0	20

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: In the suitable portion of the WSA, wilderness values can be maintained. However, development of any valid mining claim could have a deleterious impact to the wilderness values. In the nonsuitable areas, a loss of naturalness caused by specific localized mineral exploration and development is expected.
2. Impact to Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Locatable mineral exploration and development would have significant adverse impacts in the designated portion of the area. In the nonsuitable portion, opportunities for mineral exploration and development would be available.
3. Impact to Bighorn Sheep/Habitat: In the suitable portion of the area, the bighorn sheep would be enhanced by wilderness designation. In the nonsuitable portion of the area, site-specific locations could be impacted by mineral exploration and development.
4. Impact to Native American and Cultural Values: Culture resource values would be positively affected by wilderness designation of the suitable area. Opportunities for motorized access to Native American collecting sites within the suitable portion of the WSA would be negatively affected. The nonsuitable portion of the area could be site-specifically affected by mineral exploration and development.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received.

1. Inventory Phase: No comments were received specific to this area, since this WSA was created as a result of comments received on the Saline Valley WSA, one of which pointed out the existence of a road which became the northern boundary of this roadless area.
2. Study Phase: Comments on this small area were largely consolidated with those on the adjacent Saline Valley WSA. Out of 78 letters referring to this region, a slight majority favored wilderness designation. Scenic quality, vegetation, and educational, geologic, historic and cultural values were topics of concern. Protection from grazing, burros, and motorized vehicles was recommended for protection of vegetation. Proximity to DVNM was seen as a factor which would facilitate the management of this area as wilderness.

Opponents of wilderness discussed activities that would be either limited or prohibited under wilderness designation. These included mineral and geothermal development and activities requiring motorized vehicle access. Occasional aircraft overflights were seen as a factor adversely affecting wilderness.

3. Draft Plan Alternative: A variety of viewpoints on this WSA were expressed in response to the Draft Desert Plan Alternatives. Some agreed with the Protection alternative, which recommended this area for wilderness status; others urged a reduction in the amount of Saline Valley that was found suitable. Exploration and development of minerals, oil and gas were viewed by some as the best uses for the area.
4. Proposed Plan: Conservation groups advocated designation of all of this WSA as wilderness. They wanted to include the valley portion of the WSA in order to encompass the complete ecosystem. Mining groups and vehicle recreationists recommended nonwilderness status, so that mineral exploration and vehicle access would not be disturbed.

No comments were received from local governments.

North Death Valley

CDCA 118

NORTH DEATH VALLEY WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-118)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

13,302 acres

The North Death Valley WSA is in Inyo County, in the northern part of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest communities are Big Pine, 35 miles west; and Bishop, 50 miles northwest. The WSA includes 13,302 acres of public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). There are no split estate, private or State lands within the WSA (See Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern border of the WSA is Last Chance Canyon Road and an unnamed maintained dirt road that continues into the State of Nevada. The California/Nevada border forms the northeastern border for approximately three and one-half miles. The southeastern border is a maintained dirt road from the California/Nevada border traversing west for approximately four miles towards Little Sand Spring. The western border starts near Little Sand Spring and follows North Death Valley Road for approximately eight miles to Last Chance Canyon Road.

The WSA contains approximately 75% alluvial fans, 15% dissected fans, 5% hills, and 5% plains. The area is flat to semi-rolling with southeast-facing moderate slopes. The elevation varies from 2,960 feet in the south to 3,880 feet along the northern boundary. Vegetation in the area is predominantly creosote bush scrub, but also includes shadscale scrub and sagebrush scrub.

Approximately two percent of the WSA is within the Big and Little Sand Springs Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The ACEC is located on the western boundary of the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0	acres recommended for wilderness
13,302	BLM acres not recommended for wilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the North Death Valley WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

While the WSA did meet the general criteria of wilderness as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, further studies during the preparation of the CDCA Plan determined that the area's value as wilderness did not exceed the potential for other uses. The no-wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the WSA has high potential for molybdenum; (2) vehicle routes and a bladed airstrip have caused a loss of naturalness in the southern portion of the WSA; (3) the scenic quality, landforms, color, and vegetation are not unique to the region and would add no special qualities to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS); and (4) solitude is hampered by the activity of vehicles along the borders of the WSA.

The high mineral potential of the WSA attest to the area's value for uses other than wilderness. The mineral values include a major molybdenum deposit in the northeastern portion of the WSA. As of December 1987, there were 58 mining claims located within the WSA. Considering the mineral potential of the area, it's likely that a portion of these claims would withstand a validity exam and be developed.

There are approximately 12 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. Man's activity within the southern one-third of the WSA has caused a loss of naturalness within the area. Impacts which were overlooked in the inventory include two bladed roads, and a bladed air strip. The activity of vehicles along North Death Valley Road cause a loss of solitude to adjacent portions of the WSA. If valid mining claims are developed in the mineralized area of the WSA, solitude and naturalness would be lessened within those areas due to vehicular traffic and the mining developments.

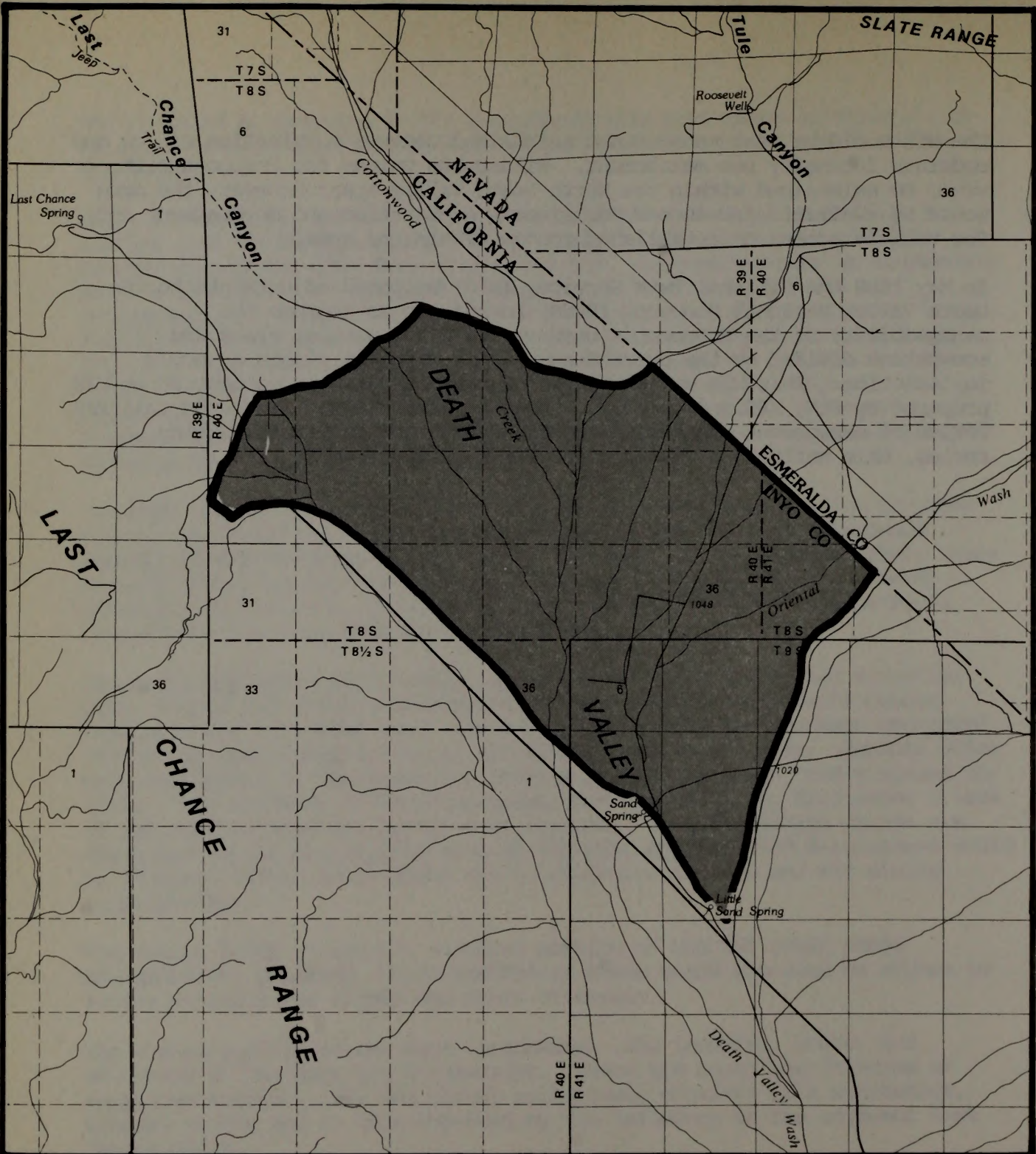
Two bladed roads within the southern portion of the WSA could cause manageability problems within the WSA as these roads are used as access to active mining areas within the state of Nevada.

The scenic quality of the area is mundane. The landform, color, and diversity of the area are nondescript. There are no unique features or sensitive species. The WSA almost exclusively consists of a monotonous, sloping bajada and is only enhanced by the influence of the adjacent Last Chance Range.

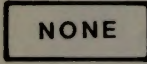


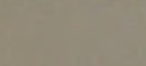
The WSA supports the Last Chance Grazing Allotment and Sand Spring/Last Chance Herd Management Area for wild burros. Wilderness designation would limit the types of management techniques available for burro management, particularly use of mechanized equipment.


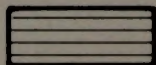
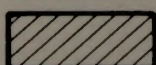
The WSA would be best managed and maintained under a combination of low and moderate intensity use management. Wilderness values for the most part would be maintained within the North Death Valley area; however, the area would be available for access for mineral exploration and development and for vehicle access on established routes within the area.

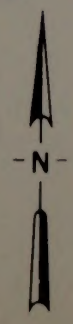
In May 1988 the National Park Service, (NPS) proposed adjustments to the Death Valley National Monument (DVNM) boundaries to improve the manageability of the Monument's borders and place natural areas and ecosystems divided by the current boundaries within a single agency's jurisdiction. This WSA was examined for this boundary adjustment in an EIS prepared by BLM, NPS and the U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM). Based on this EIS, review of management and administrative needs, and public and agency review, this entire WSA was proposed for transfer to NPS.



T8S
T9S

-  NONE
-  RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
-  RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS
-  LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

-  SPLIT ESTATE
-  STATE
-  PRIVATE



**North Death Valley
Proposal
MAP-1**

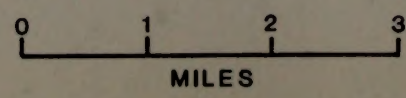


TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	13,302
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
Total		<u>13,302</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	13,302
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>13,302</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Approximately two-thirds of the WSA has been affected primarily by natural forces, with man's imprints substantially unnoticeable. A further analysis since the inventory phase found there are two bladed roads and a bladed airstrip within the southern one-third of the WSA. The roads bisect the WSA and service active mining areas within the state of Nevada. The roads and airstrip cause a loss of naturalness within the southern portion of the area.

2. Solitude: Man's activity within and outside this small WSA cause a loss of solitude. The WSA has roads on three sides. One of the roads is a north/south road providing access to DVNM. This road receives considerable traffic which contributes to a loss of solitude due to noise and dust raised by the vehicles along the entire western border of the WSA. The lack of sufficient screening within the WSA causes the wilderness user to see and hear the activities of man outside as well as inside the WSA.

This WSA is periodically overflown by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The open space and topography provide some opportunities for primitive recreation. However, the presence of roads, the airstrip, and other obvious sights and sounds of human activity reduce the quality of the primitive recreation experience.
4. Special Features: Approximately two percent of the WSA is within the Big and Little Sand Springs Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This ACEC was designated to protect plant and wildlife values. Otherwise there are no special features within the WSA.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 13,302 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. It would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS. This particular ecosystem is ubiquitous in the California desert, and is represented by many other areas recommended for wilderness designation.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PVN	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,743	117	4,254,607
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,640,803

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of two major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The closest designated wilderness area is the John Muir Wilderness in the Inyo National Forest, approximately 60 air miles west of the WSA. There are four recommended suitable WSAs within a 50-mile radius of the area.

C. Manageability

The North Death Valley WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, future mineral development could threaten the WSA's wilderness values.

The mineral resources include a major molybdenum deposit in the northeastern portion of the WSA. As of December 1987, there were 58 mining claims located within the WSA. Considering the mineral potential of the area, it likely that a portion of these claims would withstand a

validity exam, allowing for their development. Development of valid existing rights could seriously affect BLM's ability to maintain wilderness values.

The two bladed roads in the southern portion of the WSA are used for access to an approved mining plan of operations and to mining areas in Nevada. Wilderness designation would create manageability problems relative to the use of these roads.

Manageability of the area as wilderness would not be significantly affected by activities associated with the Last Chance Grazing Allotment.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) of 1980, stated that the WSA has a potential for the occurrence of molybdenum, copper, tin, rare earths, sand, gravel, and clay.

A letter from Amoco Minerals Company dated January 23, 1979, stated that the northeastern portion of the WSA along the California-Nevada border should be considered as having a high potential for molybdenum resources. The letter indicated that Amoco Minerals was actively exploring the WSA in 1979. Data from this letter was not used in a classification in the GRA, but may have supported the EIS statement on potential for the occurrence of molybdenum. The WSA was not classified in the GRA files for occurrence potential of metallic and nonmetallic minerals, sodium, potassium, uranium, and thorium due to the lack of sufficient data. A low potential for the occurrence of oil and gas was assigned to the WSA based on a prospectively valuable classification (1979) by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No USGS or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral survey has been conducted for the WSA because the area was recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. The California Division of Mines and Geology has completed a mineral land classification of the WSA. Results of the study have not been made public, but the report is expected to be released in 1988.

No mining or exploration activity has been approved by BLM in the WSA, but interest remains high. Mineral interest within the WSA is further indicated by the following BLM mining claim data recorded December 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE MINING CLAIM	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	N/A	49	49	N/A	980	980
Placer	N/A	4	4	N/A	160	160
Mill Site	N/A	5	5	N/A	25	25
Total	N/A	58	58	N/A	1,165	1,165

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impacts on Wilderness Values: There will be moderate adverse impacts on naturalness due to mineral exploration and development activity for molybdenum in the northeastern portion of the WSA. In site-specific areas within the WSA, noise and dust created by mining exploration and development will cause a loss of solitude. Mineral exploration and development could also adversely affect opportunities for primitive recreation if development occurs within the northwestern portion of the area.
2. Impacts on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for exploration and development of locatable minerals will continue to be available within the entire WSA.
3. Impact on Motorized Vehicle Access: Opportunities for motorized recreation on designated routes of travel will continue to be available within the WSA.
4. Impact on Big and Little Sand Springs ACEC: The ACEC will continue to be managed according to the guidelines presented in the CDCA Plan. All proposed activities will be subjected to environmental analysis to identify potential impacts to the resources within the ACEC, and develop appropriate mitigation measures.

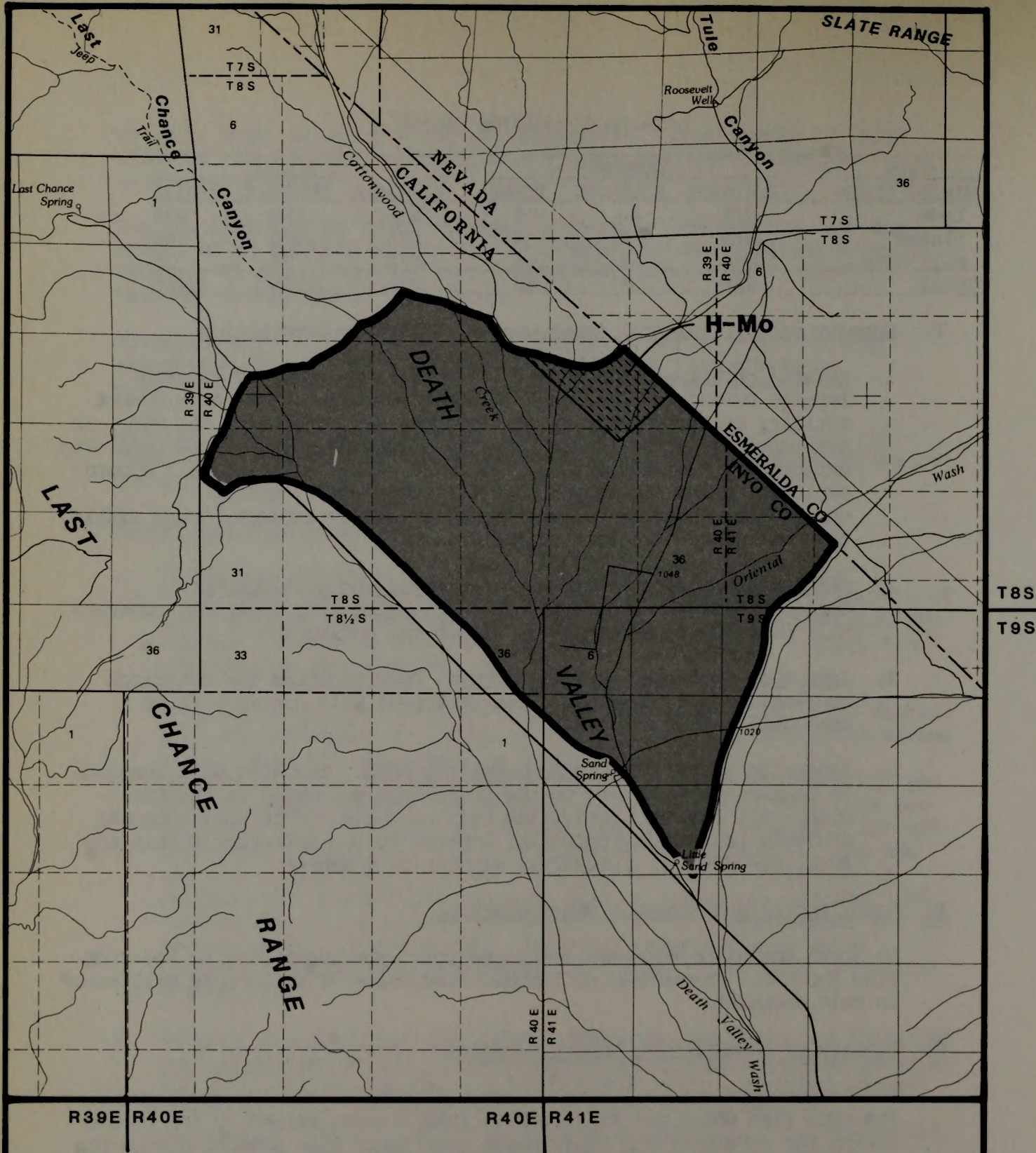
F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

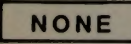

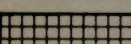
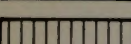
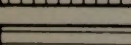
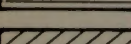
No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

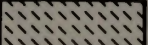
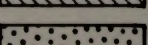
Public comments were solicited through all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan which was finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the inventory and study phase were taken into account during the development of the Draft Plan Alternative and Proposed Plan.

1. Inventory Phase: The comments received during the inventory phase supported the findings.



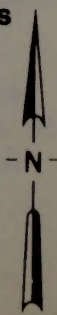
- | | | |
|--|------|---|
|  | NONE | Recommended for Wilderness |
|  | | Recommended for Non Wilderness |
|  | | Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness |
|  | | Split Estate |
|  | | State |
|  | | Private |

Explanation

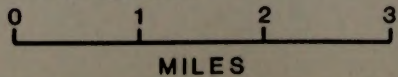
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|---|--|
|  | High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
|  | Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| M | Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area |
| H | High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area |

Commodity Symbols

Mo Molybdenum



North Death Valley Mineral Resource Potential



CDCA-118

2. Study Phase: Of the 11 comments received on this WSA, eight favored wilderness designation and three opposed it. The principal reason was the outstanding opportunities provided for solitude and primitive recreation such as hiking, backpacking, camping, birdwatching, and nature study. Comments spoke of the area's superior scenic qualities, and one said it is an excellent example of a non-mountainous wilderness area. Two writers wanted to incorporate WSAs CDCA-117 through CDCA-119 into one contiguous area.

The California Air Resources Board urged wilderness qualification for all WSAs close to Federally protected areas such as DVNM for the protection of clean air reservoirs. This WSA was given as an example of such WSA areas.

The comments opposing wilderness designation were concerned about several "roads" which were not included in the wilderness description. They also mentioned scars of mining activity and the lack of opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. A minerals company claimed that the area has a high potential for the discovery of economic molybdenum deposits and that mineral exploration should be given priority consideration.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rock hounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for this area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Little Sand Spring

CDCA 119

LITTLE SAND SPRING WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-119)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

36,440 acres

The Little Sand Spring WSA is located in Inyo County in the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest communities are Big Pine, 40 miles west, and Bishop, 55 miles northwest. The area is composed of 35,792 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and 648 acres of State lands. There are no private or split estate lands within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

From the study area's northern tip, the eastern WSA boundary follows the California/Nevada state line south for 15 miles. At the southeastern corner, it meets the northern boundary of Death Valley National Monument (DVNM). The southern WSA boundary follows the DVNM border ten miles west, crosses county-maintained North Death Valley Road, and continues for three-quarters of a mile to Death Valley Wash. The western boundary follows the wash northwest for six miles until it crosses North Death Valley Road near Little Sand Spring. The boundary then trends northeast, following a primitive way for four miles until it once again meets the California/Nevada state line.

The WSA contains the western foothills of the Gold Mountains, which extend from Nevada into California. The foothills generally appear rounded, with many canyons that gradually slope southwesterly onto a flat to rolling bajada, which has numerous washes that drain into the sands of Death Valley. The area is unusually diverse, representing a cross-section of Great Basin lowland and upland desert environments. The elevation varies from approximately 2,600 feet to 5,363 feet. At the lowest elevations, near Little Sand Springs, saltbush scrub is prevalent and intergrades into creosote bush scrub. The latter is predominant on the bajadas up to about 4,000 feet. Within the mountains, blackbrush scrub, shadscale scrub, and sagebrush scrub occur.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: use, balanced, protection, and no value), and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

36,440 acres recommended for wilderness

0 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

All wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. In addition to the Federal acreage recommended for wilderness, BLM recommends that 648 acres of State land be acquired through exchange and designated as wilderness. With

acquisition of this inholding, a total of 36,440 acres are recommended for wilderness. Appendix 1 provides additional information on acquisition of the inholding.

All wilderness is the balanced alternative and the environmentally-preferable alternative, as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The WSA is being recommended as wilderness because of its outstanding wilderness values, and few conflicting uses.

With the exception of the North Death Valley Road, the entire area has outstanding wilderness values. The area has primeval naturalness. The large sweeping bajadas, rugged canyons, and mountains offer the wilderness traveler majestic views of unspoiled wilderness. Outstanding solitude is abundant within the WSA. The wilderness traveler can find out-of-the-way places for exceptional solitude. Outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation can be found throughout the WSA, a trackless area where man seldom visits. The WSA is large enough for the wilderness user to backpack for several days without ever seeing the sights or sounds of man. The rugged terrain offers the wilderness traveler the challenge to experience the wilderness on its own terms. Few visitors penetrate the interior of this rugged, wild area. The suitability recommendation will preclude any further vehicular use of approximately 14 miles of primitive access routes of travel.

The WSA does have mineral potential, as is evidenced by the 182 mining claims, but this is overshadowed by the area's exceptional wilderness values. The southern portion of the WSA has moderate potential for the occurrence of gold, and the northeastern portion has a moderate potential for silver. The southwestern portion of the WSA has a moderate potential for the occurrence of sodium and potassium. There are no public records of mining production from within the area.

Inyo County maintains North Death Valley Road, which lies within the western portion of the WSA. This road has been in place for approximately 20 years. The wilderness inventory team used a 1954 topographic map to draw the boundary of the WSA. North Death Valley Road was not reflected on that map. Subsequently, there is a fully bladed and regularly maintained road within the western portion of the WSA. When the area is designated, the boundary should be changed to make North Death Valley Road the western boundary of the wilderness (see Map 1).

In May 1988 the National Park Service (NPS) proposed adjustments to the DVNM boundaries to improve the manageability of the Monument's borders and place natural areas and ecosystems divided by the current boundaries within a single agencies jurisdiction. This WSA was examined for this boundary adjustment in an EIS prepared by BLM, NPS, and U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM). Based on this EIS, review of management and administrative needs, and public and agency review, this entire WSA was proposed for transfer to the NPS.



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A horizontal number line is shown with the word "MILES" centered below it. There are four tick marks labeled 0, 1, 2, and 3 from left to right.

CDCA-119
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	35,792
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		648
Private		0
Total		<u>36,440</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	35,792
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>35,792</u>
Inholdings ¹		
State		648
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	0
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>

¹Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non-Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non-Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area displays primeval naturalness with very few imprints of man. The only imprint of man is the 30-foot wide, crowned and ditched, county-maintained, North Death Valley dirt road, which was overlooked in the wilderness inventory. A seven-mile segment of the road passes along the western edge of the WSA. BLM recommended that this road, and the land west of the road, be excluded from the designated wilderness.
2. Solitude: Solitude can be found throughout the WSA. The bajadas have enough dips and washes to allow wilderness travelers to feel secluded. The remainder of the WSA is highly dissected and affords numerous opportunities for solitude. Due to a mapping error, North Death Valley Road was included within the western boundary of the WSA. Opportunities for solitude are reduced in the vicinity of the road, by the sight and sound of traffic.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Primitive and unconfined recreation can be enjoyed throughout the majority of the WSA. The wilderness traveler can hike or backpack through the WSA and not be constrained by acts of man. The only portion of the area where the wilderness traveler would be hindered by the acts of man is the bladed dirt road in the western portion of the area.
4. Special Features: Native American values exist in this area. The Panamint Shoshone Tribe has traditionally used the area and still maintains seasonal collection camps for fiber, herbs, and basketry materials.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 35,792 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. Although there are many such areas in the California desert, this WSA exemplifies the rugged Mojave Desert in its untouched, wild state.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,743	117	4,267,909
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,743	88	3,618,313

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of two major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463
Reno	39	4,647,230	175	6,904,809

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of seven BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is John Muir Wilderness, 46 miles west.

C. Manageability

The Little Sand Spring WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, there are few issues that would complicate the effective management of this area as wilderness. Manageability would be enhanced through a boundary adjustment and acquisition of valid existing rights.

The county-maintained North Death Valley Road should have been the southwestern border of the WSA. This road was not marked on the 1954 version of the U.S. Geologic (USGS) Survey topographic map which was

used to draw the boundaries of the WSA. Further field investigation noted the existence of the road. If the area is designated wilderness, the county-maintained road should be the wilderness boundary on the western side.

Portions of this WSA have moderate potential for gold and silver (see Energy and Mineral Resource Values). The WSA has 182 mining claims. In view of the area's mineral potential, it is probable that some of these claims would withstand a validity examination, making their development possible within a designated wilderness. To assure the long-term protection of existing high-quality wilderness values, it may be necessary to acquire the valid mineral rights. Otherwise, naturalness and opportunities for solitude will suffer if future mineral development occurs.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Little Sand Spring WSA is in the BLM Last Chance Range Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 stated that the WSA has potential for the occurrence of lithium, uranium, thorium, oil, gas, sand, and gravel. The G-E-M narrative also stated that the WSA has potentially favorable rock types often associated with deposits of perlite, limestone, dolomite, borates, and barite. A small area in the southwestern corner of the WSA was classified as prospectively valuable for sodium and potassium by the USGS.

The 1980 BLM GRA report classified the southwestern portion of the WSA as having a low potential for the occurrence of lithium, based on the association of lithium with prospectively valuable (USGS, 1979) sodium and potassium playa deposits. Eighty to 90% of the WSA, excluding the extreme southeastern portion, was classified by the USGS (1979) as being prospectively valuable for the occurrence of oil and gas deposits. The BLM GRA report classified the prospectively valuable area as having a low-occurrence potential for oil and gas.

The remainder of the WSA was not classified for the occurrence of metallic and nonmetallic mineral deposits due to lack of sufficient data. However, the BLM GRA report stated that rock types favorable for commercial quantities limestone, dolomite, perlite, and borates exist in the southwestern portion of the WSA encompassing the northern Grapevine Mountains. The report also noted that the extreme southwestern corner of the WSA contains rock types often found in association with barite deposits. Anomalous barium values documented in the BLM GRA file data may have supported this

conclusion. The report cited alluvial fan deposits in the northern one-half of the WSA as having a low potential occurrence classification for sand, gravel, and clay deposits, based on a local need for the maintenance of the numerous county maintained roads in the area. The southeastern portion of the WSA encompassing the northern Grapevine Mountains was classified as having a low potential for the occurrence of pumice, pumicite, cinders, and crushed rock material. The report cited airborne radiometric data anomalies as the basis for a low occurrence potential for uranium and thorium minerals in the central area of the WSA.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: The USGS and the U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) conducted mineral surveys of the WSA. The results of the BOM survey were published in 1983 (MLA-103-83) and the combined report of the USGS and BOM was published in 1984 (Open File Report OFR-84-557). A re-evaluation of a portion of the WSA was conducted by the USGS and BOM and published in 1985 (OFR-85-215).

The USGS and BOM surveys supported the findings for leasable minerals in the BLM GRA file, and provided new information on metallic minerals. Map 2 shows areas of moderate mineral occurrence potential based on BLM GRA file data for leasable minerals and USGS/BOM data for gold and silver.

During the BOM mineral investigations in 1981 and 1983, no mines, prospects, or mineral resources were identified in the WSA. However, the BOM report stated that most mining activity near the WSA has centered in gold placers and lodes on Magruder and Gold Mountains in Nevada, and in the Last Chance Range. Production figures from the BOM files state that the Tokop District immediately to the north produced 3,311 troy ounces of gold, 37,241 troy ounces of silver, 11,708 pounds of copper and 53,493 pounds of lead. BOM personnel examined the Silvia Mine, adjacent to the WSA, and found gold, silver, copper, and lead-bearing shear zones which trend toward the WSA.

The combined USGS and BOM studies identified two distinct areas of metallic mineralization in the WSA. Their report classified the southern area as having a low occurrence potential for gold. However, additional geochemical data, provided by an exploration company working on the Juanita prospect (182 unpatented lode mining claims) was evaluated by USGS and BOM in 1985, and combined with existing data, provided justification for an upgrading of the southern area to a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold. An area in the northeastern portion of the WSA surrounding the Sylvia Mine was classified in the combined studies as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of silver and a low potential for the occurrence of molybdenum. The report identified the Sylvia Mine as being geochemically related to the nearby (Cucomungo deposit) molybdenum enriched area. The report stated that there was

a reasonable assumption that small, high-grade silver deposits would be associated with molybdenum in the area beneath the alluvial cover.

Since 1980, two plans of operation have been approved in the WSA. In July 1987, approval was granted to U.S. Borax to drill seven deep exploration drill holes in the western portion of the WSA on the Lynn claim group. Drilling was begun in December 1987, but the results of the drilling program had not been made public at the time of this report. In September 1983, approval was granted to R.E. Pray to conduct exploration drilling on the Death Valley No. 1 placer claim in lower Oriental Wash. Results of the drilling program had also not been made public at the time of this report.

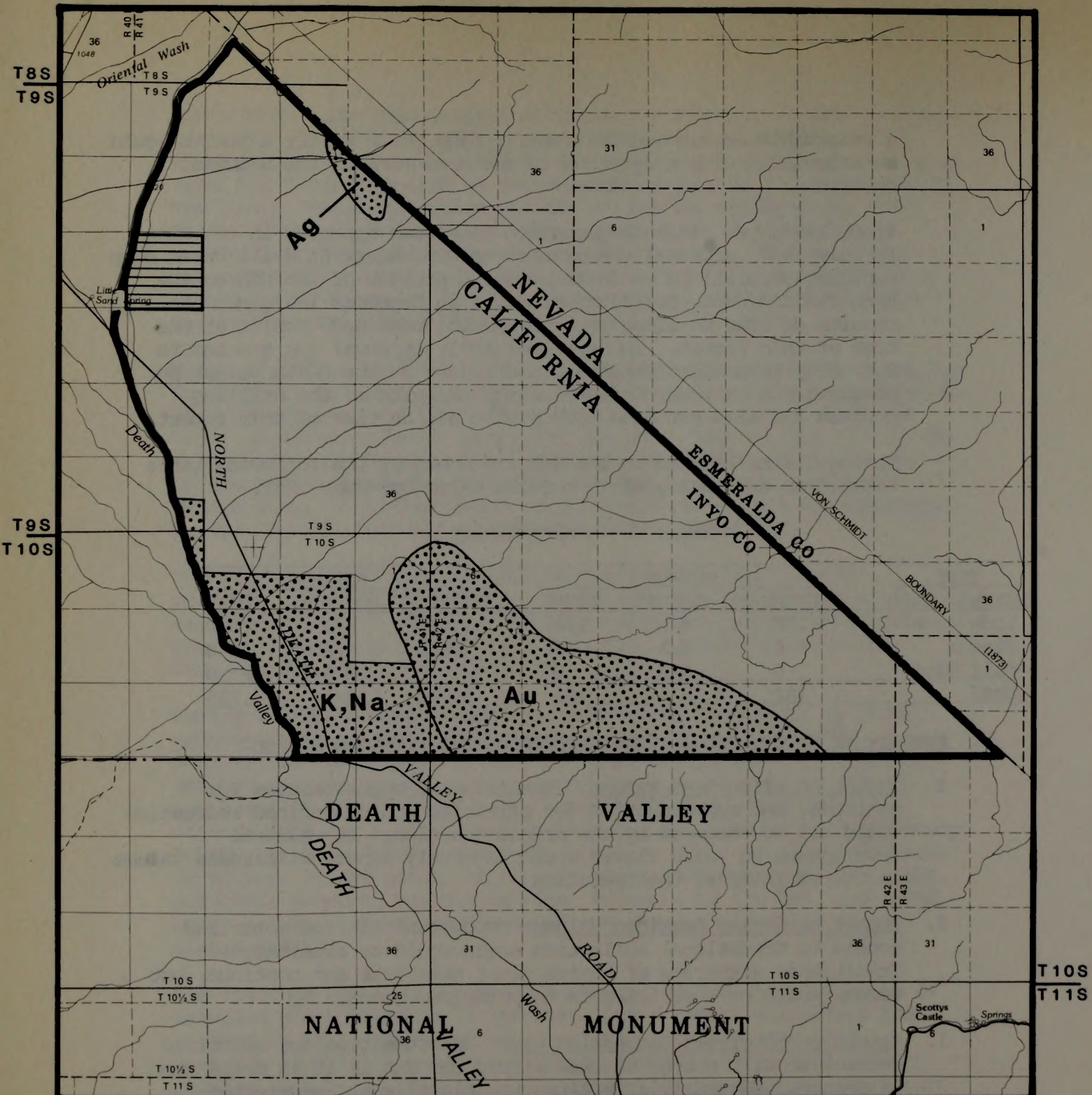
Mining Claims located in the WSA are shown by the following table taken from BLM mining claim records dated December 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	178	N/A	178	3,560	N/A	3,560
Placer	4	N/A	4	160	N/A	160
Mill Site	0	N/A	0	0	N/A	0
Total	182	N/A	182	3,720	N/A	3,720

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Naturalness, opportunities for solitude, and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation would all be enhanced by the proposed action. Any mineral development on valid claims would adversely impact wilderness values in the vicinity of the operation.
2. Impact on Native American Values: Opportunities for motorized access to traditional collection areas would be eliminated. Traditional gathering of native plant materials can continue, but access would be restricted to nonmotorized means.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use: Opportunities for motorized recreation will not be allowed within the WSA if it is designated wilderness, adversely affecting traditional vehicle-oriented recreation use.
4. Impact on County-Maintained Road: Opportunities for use of the county-maintained road may be eliminated if the boundary is not changed to reflect the road as the boundary of the area designated wilderness.



Recommended for Wilderness

NONE Recommended for Non Wilderness

Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness

Split Estate

State

Private

Explanation

High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals

Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals

M Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area

H High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

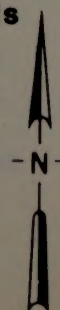
Commodity Symbols

Ag Silver

Au Gold

K Potassium

Na Sodium



Little Sand Spring
Mineral Resource Potential

0 1 2 3
MILES

MAP-2
CDCA-119

5. Impact on Locatable and Salable Minerals: After wilderness designation, no new claims can be staked and no mineral material sales will be consummated within the area. Development of the 182 existing claims would be subject to proof of a valid discovery.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments generally supported the inventory data on wilderness qualifications of this area. However, two respondents questioned the definition of "roads" and suggested eliminating the border between North Valley WSA (CDCA-118) and this WSA to make a continuous unit.
2. Study Phase: Eleven of the 13 comments received for this WSA favored wilderness designation. Valuable wilderness resources which were mentioned included scenic quality, cactus, birds, air quality, historic values and primitive recreation, particularly hiking. Contiguity with DVNM and other WSAs was seen to be an asset for wilderness management of this area. Combined management with potential contiguous wilderness in Nevada was proposed. Concern was expressed by several respondents about the need for burro removal or management. Wilderness designation was seen to be a means of protecting wildlife and vegetation in the bajada area against competition from cattle and burros.

The two comments opposing wilderness designation mentioned that general sights and sounds have caused a deterioration of wilderness quality, and the need for vehicular access for rockhounds and campers.

Three letters were received in response to the public input workbook (3/15/79). All favored wilderness designation due to the adjoining proposed wilderness in DVNM.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: During review of the Draft Plan Alternative, this particular WSA was the object of few comments. However, it was one of a large number of WSAs recommended as suitable by the Sierra Club and other conservation organizations and as unsuitable by the National Outdoor Coalition, an association of mining and off-highway vehicle groups.
4. Proposed Plan: Again, this individual WSA elicited few specific comments but received the general support of conservation groups and the opposite from user groups.
5. Plan Amendments, 1982: An amendment proposed by the County of Inyo and by the California Department of Fish and Game established a new ACEC at Big Sand Spring and Little Sand Spring, both of which are either inside or immediately adjacent to this WSA (due to a subsequent boundary change the ACEC is no longer within the WSA).

APPENDIX 1
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION
LITTLE SAND SPRING WSA (CDCA-119)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				TOTAL ACREAGE	NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	
	TWNSHP	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN			SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)
1	9S.	41E.	16	MDM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0

These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.

Waucoba Wash

CDCA 120

WAUCOBA WASH WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-120)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---- 14,115 acres

The Waucoba Wash WSA is located in Inyo County in the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest small communities are Lone Pine, 110 miles southwest, and Big Pine, 40 miles west. The city of Bishop is 60 miles to the northwest. The area is composed entirely of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). No State, private or split estate lands are located within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern boundary is Marble Canyon Road beginning at the Inyo National Forest border and trending east for one mile. The boundary intersects with North Saline Valley Road and follows it south for nine miles. At this point a cherrystemmed road enters the WSA for one-half mile and ends at the Waucoba Tungsten Mine. The boundary continues south for three miles until it meets a cherrystemmed road. The cherrystemmed road enters the WSA and continues for three and one-half miles. The boundary continues south for one mile until it intersects with Blue Monster Mine Road. The boundary follows Blue Monster Mine Road for one and a half miles west to a cherrystemmed road which juts into the WSA for two miles and ends at Bunker Hill Mine. The boundary then trends west and south towards Blue Monster Mine. The boundary skirts around Blue Monster Mine on the northern side ending at the Inyo National Forest Boundary (USFS). The boundary follows Inyo National Forest Border north for twelve miles following section lines until it returns to Marble Canyon Road, the northern boundary of the WSA.

The WSA contains approximately 85% mountains and 15% alluvial fans. The topography consists of steep canyons and alluvial plains on the eastern side of the WSA. The western portion of the WSA is mountainous and covered with pinyon pine trees. The west boundary also forms part of the eastern slope of the Inyo Mountains. The northern portion of the WSA is a flat to rolling plateau known as Whippoorwill Flat, a feature which extends into the Inyo National Forest. Elevations range from 3,600 feet in the easternmost part of the WSA to 8,460 feet in elevation in the western portion of the area.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0	acres recommended for wilderness
14,115	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

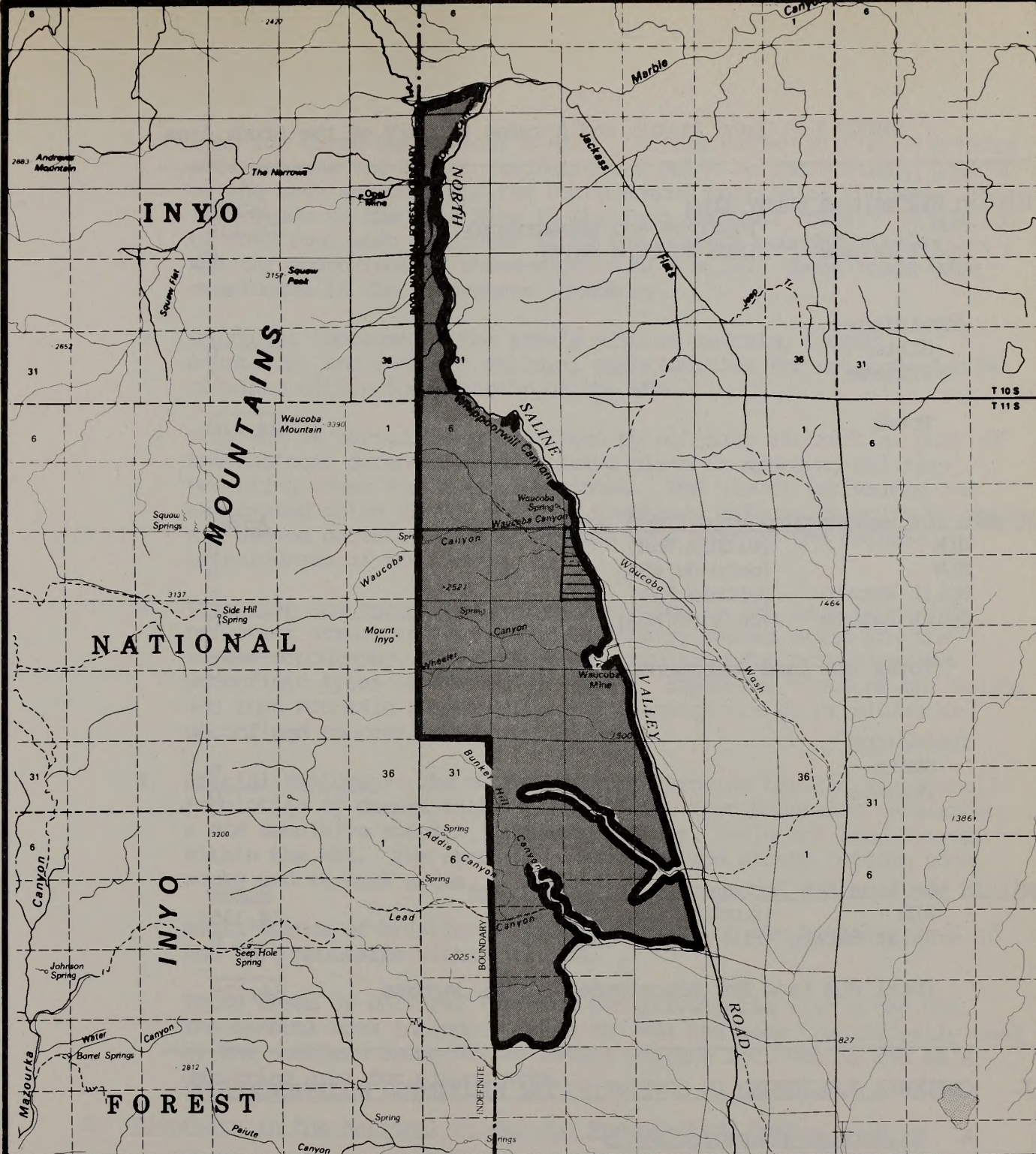
The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally-preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

While the WSA did meet the general criteria of wilderness as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, further studies during the preparation of the CDCA Plan determined that the area's values as wilderness did not exceed the potential for other uses as follows: (1) specific areas have high mineral potential for gold, silver, tungsten, lead and copper and the remainder of the area has a moderate potential for lead, copper, tungsten, molybdenum, zinc, gold, and silver; (2) the southern portion of the area has a loss of naturalness due to prior existing ways and evidence of previous mining activity; and (3) the area is used by contemporary Native Americans as a food gathering and ceremonial area.

The area's mineral potential attests to other uses than wilderness. The extreme northern boundary of the WSA has a high potential for gold. The southern portion of the WSA contains areas of high potential for gold, silver, copper and tungsten. The area has a moderate potential for lead, copper, tungsten, molybdenum, zinc, gold, and silver. Extensive mining exploration and development has occurred within the southern portion of the WSA. The high mineral potential outweighs the mediocre wilderness values contained within the WSA.

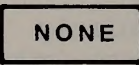

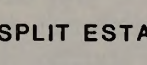

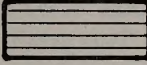
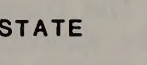
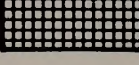
Naturalness has been compromised by mining exploration and development in the southern portion of the area. One cherrystemmed road intrudes into the area, almost bisecting it. The remaining cherrystemmed roads intrude into the WSA at various points and lead to areas which have been heavily disturbed by mining exploration and development. There are approximately two miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

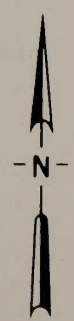
Contemporary Owens Valley Paiutes extensively use this WSA. Access to hunting and gathering areas for traditional members of the tribe is vehicle-dependent. Religious ceremonies are conducted within the WSA at various secretive locales. Wilderness designation would impact vehicular access to these areas.



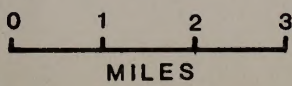
T10S
T11S

T11S
T12S

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|---|--------------|
|  | NONE |  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE |  | PRIVATE |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS | | | | |



**Waucoba Wash
Proposal
MAP-1**



CDCA-120
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	14,115
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
Total		<u>14,115</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	14,115
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>14,115</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area has been affected primarily by natural forces, with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable within the northern portion of the area. Scars from mines and mining activities are scattered throughout the WSA and are particularly noticeable in the southern two-thirds of the WSA. Old access ways are scattered off the numerous cherrystems within the area. Associated with the Waucoba Tungsten Mine is a road which extends into the WSA west of the cherrystemmed road for approximately one-half mile. Another road branches off the cherrystemmed main

road for three-quarters of a mile. At the Bunker Hill Mine a third road crosses the WSA at its narrowest point in the northern portion of the area and cuts off the northernmost portion of the WSA. This road leads to the Opal Mine in the Inyo National Forest. A portion of this road also continues along the western boundary inside the WSA for approximately three-eighths of a mile. These roads were overlooked in the wilderness inventory.

2. Solitude: Because of the area's diverse terrain, rugged mountains, and interior valleys, opportunities for solitude can be obtained within the interior of the WSA.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Due to the lack of man's permanent structures away from the cherry-stemmed areas and the varied topography, outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation exist. Expansive views of the Saline and Inyo Mountain ranges enhance the experience of primitive and unconfined recreation within the area.
4. Special Features: The mountain slopes provide habitat for a small population of desert bighorn sheep. The Inyo Mountains salamander, a BLM sensitive species, inhabits Waucoba, Addie and Lead Canyons within the WSA. The species is found in the stream bottoms under rocks and in dark areas.

Small stands of bristlecone pine are found on the higher slopes of the Inyo Mountains within the WSA.

Three areas of cultural resource sensitivity lie within the WSA. The general area included within the WSA has been traditionally used by the southern Owens Valley Paiute Indians for hunting and as a gathering area for pinyon nuts.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 7,807 acres of American Desert/Saltbush-Greasewood and 6,308 acres of American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. It would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Saltbush- Greasewood	0	0	7	241,882
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,261,667
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Saltbush- Greasewood	0	0	7	241,882
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,647,863

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is not within a five-hour drive of any major population centers.
3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of seven BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Golden Trout Wilderness Area, managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), 40 miles away.

C. Manageability

The Waucoba Wash WSA is manageable as wilderness. The southern portion of the WSA has been heavily used for mining exploration and development. Three cherrystemmed roads intrude into the WSA with one almost cutting entirely through the WSA. If mining exploration and development commences again, manageability could be drastically affected by the actions of mining within the WSA (See Energy and Mineral Resource Values).

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Waucoba Wash WSA (CDCA-120) is located in the BLM Inyo Mountains and Saline Range Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Areas (GRA)s. The BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 indicated that the WSA has a potential for the

occurrence of tungsten, lead, copper, gold, molybdenum, silver and zinc. Fifteen unpatented mining claims were known to be recorded with BLM on December 12, 1979.

The data in both of the 1980 BLM GRA files supported the EIS by indicating a high potential for the occurrence of metallic locatable minerals in three areas in the southern half of the WSA, and one area straddling the extreme northern boundary of the WSA. In these areas, Precambrian and Cambrian marine sedimentary and metasedimentary rocks have been intruded by Late Cretaceous quartz monzonite. The Inyo Mountain GRA report indicated the high potential for copper, tungsten, lead, gold, and silver in the eastern and southern portions of the WSA respectively was based on the presence of four historic mines: Blue Monster (Monster), Bunker Hill (Lucky Josephine), Lucky Boy, and Waucoba. These mines produced (not reported in the GRA file) lead, copper, tungsten, gold and silver. The EIS indicated that the Blue Monster, Bunker Hill and Waucoba mines were past producers in the WSA; however, the GRA files indicated that the mines were adjacent to, not inside, the boundary of the WSA. The 1980 GRA data file indicates that Cambrian argillites, dolomites and limestones, associated with the mineral values at these mines, extends into the west-central portion of the WSA.

The high potential for the occurrence of gold at the extreme northern edge of the WSA, as shown on Map 2, was based upon the Saline Range GRA files. Gold-bearing sediments in Marble Canyon were indicated in the GRA as possibly extending into the WSA. Most of the WSA in the Inyo Mountain GRA was classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of metallic locatable minerals (lead, copper, tungsten, molybdenum, zinc, gold and silver) in the Cambrian sediments on the basis of abundant geochemical, magnetic, and lineament study data in the GRA files. A small area (5%) in the northern part of the WSA had an "unclassified potential," but was considered as having a favorable geologic environment for the occurrence of metallic locatable minerals. The 1980 GRA indicated that the extreme southeast portion (10%) of the WSA was unfavorable for metallic locatable mineral occurrence.

The Inyo Mountain GRA report indicated most of the WSA had a "unclassified potential" but favorable geologic environment for the occurrence of talc, a nonmetallic locatable mineral. This was based on the presence of Cambrian sediments within the WSA from which talc has been produced approximately five miles south of the WSA at the Grey Eagle Mine (White Eagle Mining District). A small area in the central part of the WSA was not classified due to insufficient data.

The Inyo Mountain GRA file indicated a moderate potential for the occurrence of sand and gravel along the southeastern boundary of the WSA. The Saline Range GRA files indicated that an area along the eastern boundary in the central portion of the WSA had the same

potential. Both the Inyo and Saline Range GRA reports indicated the presence of alluvium was the basis of the moderate potential. The Inyo Mountain and Saline Valley GRA reports also indicated that the rest of the WSA was unfavorable for the occurrence of sand and gravel.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral surveys were conducted in the WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

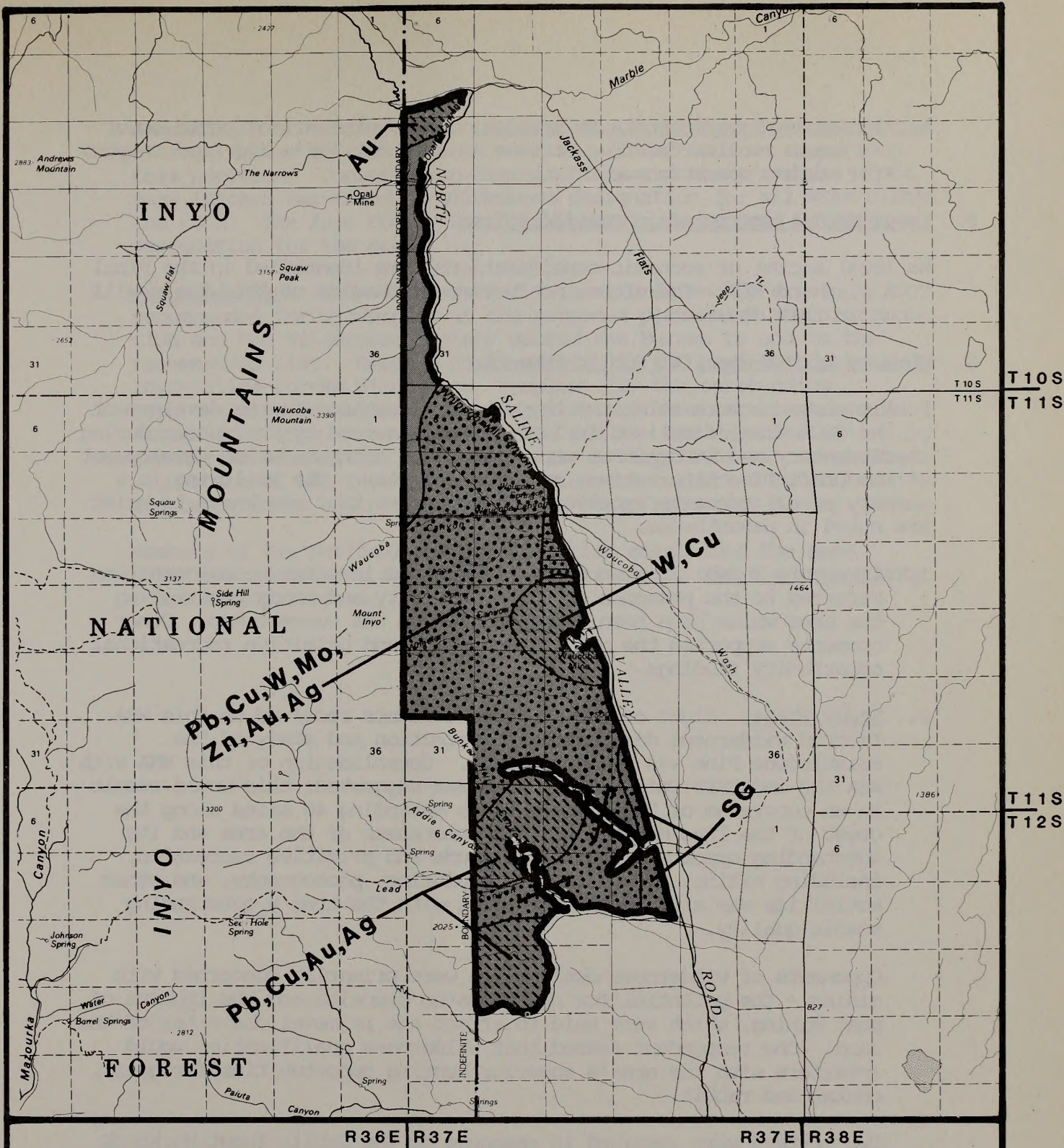
Interest in mineral exploration has increased in the WSA as evidenced by the increased number of unpatented mining claims recorded with BLM since December 12, 1979. Table 4 shows the number of unpatented mining claims recorded with BLM as of May, 1988.

Table 3 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	42	42	N/A	840	840
Placer	N/A	9	9	N/A	360	360
Mill Site	N/A	2	2	N/A	10	10
Total	N/A	53	53	N/A	1,210	1,210

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impacts on Wilderness Values: Naturalness would be reduced by impacts caused by mining exploration and development. The impacts are likely to occur in areas which have high to moderate mineral potential. Adverse impacts to solitude and a reduction of primitive and unconfined recreation will occur within the area where bladed roads occur due to mining exploration and development activities.
2. Impacts on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for exploration and development would continue to be available within the area. However, mining activities would be restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines stated in 43 CFR 3809 regarding surface disturbances, as well as any additional constraints stated in the CDCA Plan.
3. Impact on Native American Values: Opportunities for access by Native Americans would not be hindered by the proposed action. Traditional gathering areas would remain accessible to motorized vehicles as will hunting and ceremonial areas.
4. Impact on Bighorn Sheep Habitat: Bighorn sheep habitat would receive minor localized adverse impacts from mineral exploration and development.



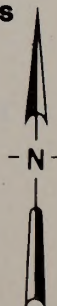
	NONE	Recommended for Wilderness
		Recommended for Non Wilderness
		Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
		Split Estate
		State
		Private

Explanation

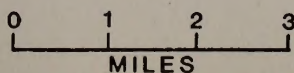
	High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
	Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
M	Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
H	High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

Au	Gold
Ag	Silver
Cu	Copper
Mo	Molybdenum
Pb	Lead
SG	Sand & Gravel
W	Tungsten
Zn	Zinc



**Waucoba Wash
Mineral Resource Potential**



**MAP-2
CDCA-120**

5. Impact on Inyo Mountain Salamander: An adverse affect could occur if water is diverted from streams in Waucoba, Addie and Lead Canyons for mining operations.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments which addressed inventory considerations referred to the presence of mining activity and roads penetrating the area which have been accounted for on the current map. Other comments supported the natural condition and primitive recreational opportunity findings.
2. Study Phase: Eight of the fourteen comments received on this WSA favored wilderness designation. Protection and study of the Bristlecone Pine was a major factor. Consolidation of this WSA with WSA 122 and USFS Paiute Study area was suggested; this would result in an ecosystem of Bristlecone Pines extending 40 miles along the crest of the Inyo Mountains. The remoteness of the area and its outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, including hiking, rock climbing, exploring, photography, and other activities was also mentioned, along with the area's outstanding scenic quality.

Opponents of wilderness designation were primarily concerned with mining - the potential for new tungsten deposits and the impacts of past mining, which were said to affect the primeval character of the land. One respondent feared that wilderness qualification would interfere with the area's superior hunting opportunities for quail, chukar and rabbit.

Two letters were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). Both favored designation of the area as wilderness, especially since the area is one of three areas that feature the bristlecone pine. Both letters listed solitude, spectacular natural beauty, and the ease of accessibility as features worth saving.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition,

a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for the area.

4. Proposed Plan: This WSA was one of about a dozen WSA's not recommended for wilderness in the proposed plan which the Sierra Club and the Wilderness society wanted the Bureau to add to the recommended list. Reasons given were: (1) the need to complete the Inyo-Saline-Eureka Wilderness complex, (2) the outstanding opportunities for wilderness recreation, (3) the excellent scenic vistas available throughout the WSA, and (4) the examples of transition communities from the Saline valley floor to the pinyon vegetation of the Inyos. These points were supported by at least 500 respondents and by the California State Resources Agency.

Members of the National Outdoor Coalition maintained the same positions stated for the Draft alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Saline Dunes

CDCA 121

SALINE DUNES WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-121)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

6,311 acres

The Saline Dunes WSA is located in Inyo County in the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest rural communities are Big Pine 52 miles north and Darwin 62 miles south. There are no cities within 100 miles. The area is composed of 6,311 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). There are no private, State, or split estate lands located within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The western boundary is Saline Valley Road which traverses the area from south to north. At an intersection of Saline Valley Road and the road to Saline Warm Springs the boundary trends east four and a half miles until it intersects with an unpaved dirt road which trends southwest. The boundary follows this southwest trending road for four miles until it intersects with Saline Valley Road.

The primary topographic feature in this WSA are the sand dunes, with 35% of the area composed of sand dunes, 35% composed of sand covered plains, and the remaining 30% are plains. Topography around the dunes is relatively flat and sandy. The only relief is provided by hummocks and shallow washes. Run-off from the Inyo Mountains provides subsurface water to support dense vegetation cover which stands out dramatically from the surrounding barren dry lake bottom. Visually, the dominant plant is mesquite which occurs in tall, thick stands. Arrowweed and marsh grasses, which have invaded from the nearby wetlands, are also present.

The WSA is entirely within the Saline Valley Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The ACEC was designated to provide protective management for significant wildlife habitats including sand dunes, mesquite thickets, meadows and wetlands, and prehistoric and historic cultural resources.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0 acres recommended for wilderness

6,311 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally-preferred alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

While the WSA did meet the general criteria of wilderness as defined in Section 2 (c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, further studies during the preparation of the California Desert Plan determined that the area's value as wilderness did not exceed the potential for other uses. The Saline Dunes WSA has marginal wilderness values and high and moderate mineral potentials.

The area, although natural, is not outstanding as wilderness. It is relatively flat and sandy with little topographic screening. The difference in elevation within the entire WSA is eighty feet. The WSA is typical of desert environments with flat and sandy topography. The dunes system is better represented within other study areas recommended for wilderness designation, including Saline Valley and the Panamint Dunes WSAs. Both are within the same geographic area within the California Desert.

Opportunities for solitude are not outstanding. Vehicles traveling along the entire western side of the area cause noise and dust which can be heard and seen throughout the WSA. Visitor-use days were estimated at nearly 4,000 per year in 1978. They are less now due to a motorized vehicle closure of the entire WSA, except for the artesian well area in the southeast portion of the WSA. The well is an important wildlife watering area and is also a popular camping area.

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation can be found within the area but are not considered to be unique. The wilderness traveler can hike or backpack through this small area and its sand dunes within a few hours. There are no known primitive routes of travel within the WSA.

Although the WSA is not recommended for wilderness, it does contain sensitive wildlife and cultural resource values that are currently protected and managed according to prescriptions contained within the Saline Valley ACEC management plan.

The mineral potential of the WSA attests to uses other than wilderness. A high potential exists for geothermal resources within the entire WSA. The southeastern one-fourth of the WSA has high potential for sodium and potassium. The remainder of the WSA has a moderate potential for sodium and potassium. Over 1,300 acres of this small WSA are encumbered by unpatented mining claims.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	6,311
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
Total		<u>6,311</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	6,311
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>6,311</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: With the exception of the artesian well area, the dune system is closed to all vehicles. The boundaries of the wilderness study area overlap the boundaries of the vehicle closed area. The area has retained its natural qualities although they are reduced at a few areas where vehicles have made ways to obtain passage into the Saline Dunes. A mining claim operator has a five-acre developed mill site. This mill site was established prior to the wilderness inventory. Thick stands of mesquite vegetative cover grow in the southern portion of the WSA. The remaining plant cover is

arrowweed and marsh grasses. Permanent surface water and a small riparian oasis occurs at an artesian well in the southeast portion of the area.

2. Solitude: Solitude within the boundaries of the WSA is not outstanding. The low relief of the area provides little screening; however the dense stands of mesquite and arrowweed are a prominent feature and do provide some screening and isolation. Vehicular traffic along the western border on Saline Valley Road creates both noise and dust as vehicles travel along this bumpy dirt road.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The area offers primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities due to its isolation. The wilderness visitor can hike or backpack freely through the area with no encumbrances of man.
4. Special Features: The artesian well and associated riparian oasis is a small but important water source located in the southeast portion of the area. It is important as a wildlife watering area and is also a popular camping area where many people obtain drinking water.

An area of very high cultural resource sensitivity is located in the center of the WSA. The WSA has been traditionally used by the Owens Valley Paiute and Shoshone Indians. The area includes prehistoric (village, trail, intaglio, and a cremation site) and historic sites.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System
(NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 6,311 acres of the American Desert/Saltbush-Greasewood ecosystem. Although the WSA would add diversity in the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS the Bureau has recommended three WSA's with similar ecosystems (Saline Valley WSA, Inyo Mountains WSA, and North Algodones Dunes WSA) as suitable for wilderness designation.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification <u>Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
	<u>NATIONWIDE</u>			
American Desert/Saltbush Greasewood	0	0	7	243,398
	<u>CALIFORNIA</u>			
American Desert/Saltbush Greasewood	0	0	7	243,398

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is not within a five-hour drive of any major population centers.
3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of ten BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Golden Trout Wilderness, managed by the US Forest Service, thirty miles away.

C. Manageability

The Saline Dunes WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, with the high mineral potential for the development of geothermal energy sources, the potentials to extract sodium and potassium, and the 36 existing unpatented mining claims, wilderness values would be difficult to maintain in the long-term. With the exception of the artesian well area, the WSA has been closed to unauthorized motor vehicular use since the CDCA Plan was signed in 1980. The closed area has been signed and is patrolled on a regular basis to prevent vehicular access within the area.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Saline Dunes WSA is located in the BLM Saline Valley Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M narrative in the wilderness section of the CDCA plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980, stated that the data in the GRA had not been fully analyzed, integrated and interpreted at the time of the recommendation. However, it did indicate the WSA has potential for geothermal, sodium, sand and gravel resources. Six unpatented mining claims located in the WSA were recorded on December 12, 1979.

The 1980 BLM GRA file data supported the EIS. The entire WSA was classified as having a high occurrence potential for geothermal resources based primarily on a 1979 USGS classification of the area as a Potential Geothermal Resource Area (PGRA). The southeastern one-fourth of the WSA was classified by BLM as having a high occurrence potential for sodium and potassium based on a (1979) U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) prospectively valuable classification, and a reference in the 1980 GRA file to an article in Mineral Information Service, a periodical published by the California Division of Mines in 1955 (Vol. 8, No. 8, pg. 3) which stated that the Salt Lake area to the south of the WSA was producing sodium prior to 1955. The remainder of the WSA was classified by USGS in 1979 as prospectively valuable for sodium and potassium, and as having a moderate occurrence potential for these commodities by the BLM GRA (1980) study based on favorable geologic environment although there was a lack of known deposits or occurrences. The entire WSA was classified by the BLM GRA report as having a low potential for the development of sand and gravel resources due to the isolated location, high transportation costs, and the lack of a local market and interest. The accompanying mineral potential map shows the 1980 BLM GRA classified areas.

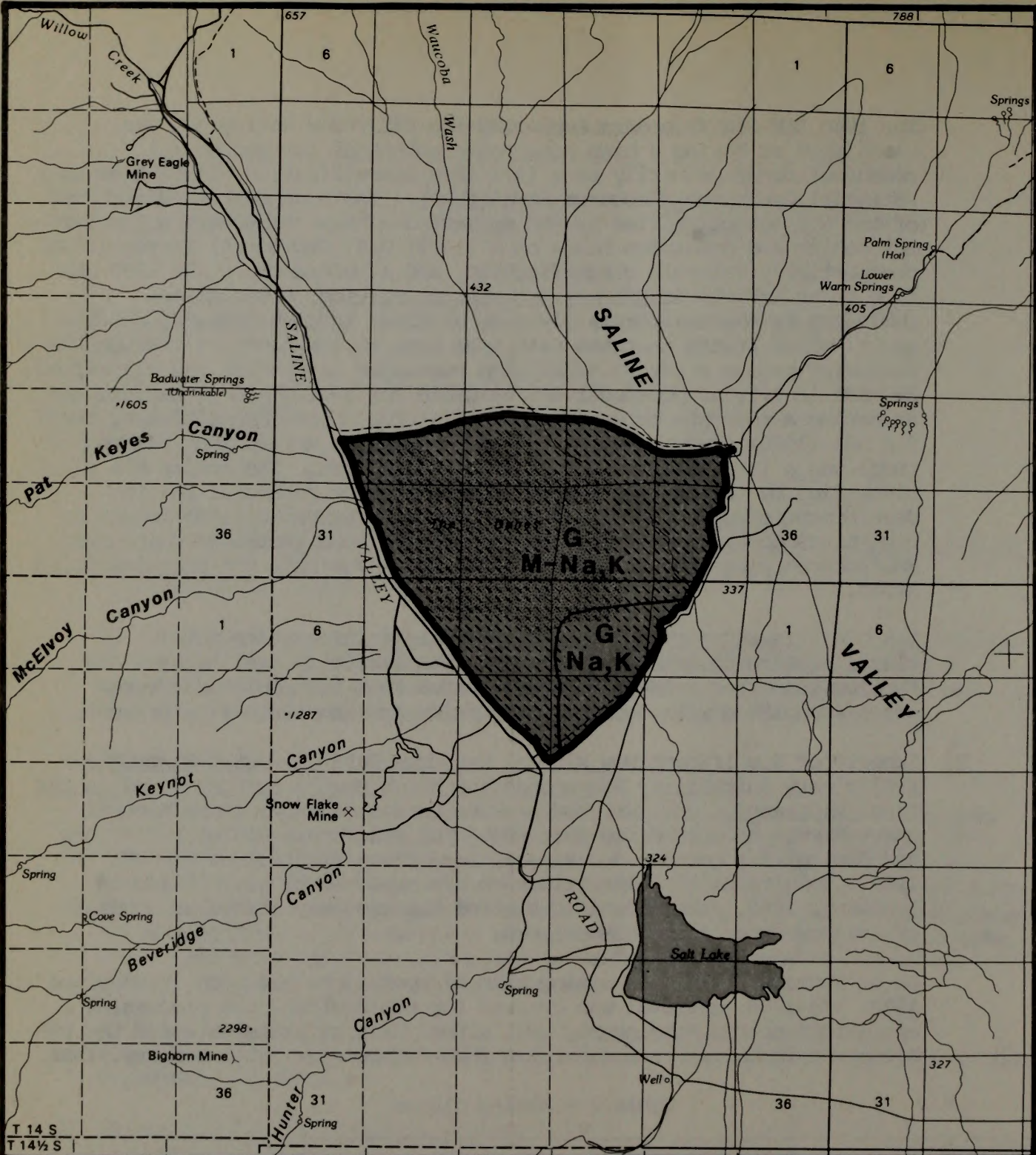
BLM GRA file data did not provide sufficient information for a classification of metallic, other nonmetallic, oil, gas, uranium and thorium resources. The GRA report stated that favorable rock types often associated with deposits of uranium and thorium may be present.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No USGS or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral surveys were conducted for this WSA. The California Division of Mines and Geology has completed a Mineral Land Classification of the WSA in 1987. Results of the classification are expected to be released in February, 1988. The classification of the area may change as a result of any new data in the CDMG report.

As of January, 1988, one mining plan of operations had been filed since 1980. In 1986, approval was granted for nonimpairing ore-processing operations on the Morning Sun mill sites. Mining claim data for the WSA are shown in Table 3 and was taken from BLM records dated January, 1988.

Table 3 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	1	1	N/A	20	20
Placer	N/A	32	32	N/A	1280	1280
Mill Site	N/A	3	3	N/A	15	15
Total	N/A	36	36	N/A	1315	1315



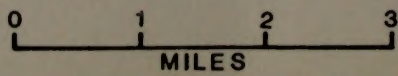
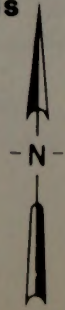
T 13 S

T 14 S

- NONE** Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

- Explanation**
- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
 - Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
 - M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
 - H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

- Commodity Symbols**
- G** Geothermal
 - K** Potassium
 - Na** Sodium



**Saline Dunes
Mineral Resource Potential**

**MAP-2
CDCA-121**

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values would not be degraded significantly as motor vehicles are already prohibited from the WSA. The heavily used Artesian water well area could be adversely affected by continued vehicular use. The development of mineral value could degrade the wilderness values over time.
2. Impact on Leasable Mineral Exploration and Development: Exploration and development would continue within the area. Mining activities would be restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines which limits vehicle access and mitigates adverse effects on sensitive resource values.
3. Impact on Geothermal Exploration and Development: Geothermal development would continue to be available. Guidelines found within the CDCA Plan and will guide development and minimize adverse effects.
4. Impact on Motorized Recreation: Opportunities for motorized recreation would remain the same.
5. Impact on Native American Values: Opportunities for access by Native Americans would not be changed. Access by foot would still be allowed.
6. Impact on the ACEC: Opportunities for the maintenance of the resource values contained within the ACEC would not be affected. Strict management guidelines would minimize any detrimental actions.
7. Impact on Cultural Resources: Opportunities for research would continue. Historical evidence of the past would not be affected.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments generally supported the findings. One pointed out roads to the artesian spring which had been left off the map, while another mentioned the presence of the black toad in the general area (the black toad does not inhabit the WSA).

2. Study Phase: Twenty comments were received on this WSA. Of these, eleven supported wilderness designation and seven were opposed.

Four respondents proposed that this WSA be combined with CDCA-117; these stated that the "road" separating these areas did not meet the BLM's definition of a road, and that it was frequently covered with water and impassible. One said that without that "road" the area, which is an integral part of the Saline Valley, would surely be recommended as wilderness along with CDCA-117.

The artesian well, the marsh and the sand dunes were mentioned as features needing protection. Opinions on whether the sand dunes were impacted by past ORV use differed according to the position of the respondent on wilderness. Those people favoring wilderness found the dunes to be "virtually untouched by ORV use"... an area providing a rare opportunity for protection and study, as well as a place offering opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. In contrast, those respondents who opposed wilderness for CDCA-121 claimed that ORV recreation was a traditional use of the dunes and that the area did not provide solitude or primitive recreation.

Opponents of wilderness were mainly concerned that vehicle recreation would be denied under wilderness management. The loss of hunting opportunity was also feared. Sights and sounds of nearby roads and military jets were seen as detractions from wilderness potential.

Three comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). All favored wilderness for this area.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received on the Draft Plan Alternatives. This WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor coalition, of mining, rockhounding and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation organizations and members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for the area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this WSA in response to the proposed plan. Motorized vehicular organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions as for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Inyo Mountains

CDCA 122

INYO MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-122)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

107,095 acres

The Inyo Mountains WSA is located in Inyo County in the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest rural community is Lone Pine, 15 miles to the west and Independence, 20 miles to the northwest. The area is composed of 106,235 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 833 acres of State lands and 27 acres of private lands. There are no split estate lands within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern boundary follows the Blue Monster Mine Road, starting at the Inyo National Forest Border and continuing east until it intersects with the Saline Valley Road. The eastern boundary follows Saline Valley Road, avoiding mining activity at Willow Creek and the White Eagle and Gray Eagle Talc Mines and continuing along the foot of the Inyo Mountains. The eastern boundary continues to roughly parallel Saline Valley Road, bypassing the following areas of surface disturbance: a cherrystemmed dirt road which follows McElvoy Canyon for two miles; the Snow Flake Talc Mine and other disturbances within this area; the Big Silver Mine area; a road following an unnamed canyon which is cherrystemmed from the WSA. The southern boundary follows Hunter Mountain Road west for four miles. At this point, the western boundary cuts directly north and follows the crest of the Nelson Mountain Range until it meets the San Lucas Canyon/Bonham Talc Road. The western boundary then follows Bonham Talc Road until it reaches the crest of the Inyo Mountains. The western boundary follows the crest of the Inyo Mountains, omitting a cherrystemmed road which enters Hunter Canyon. The boundary then follows the Inyo Mountain crest until it intersects with the Inyo National Forest Boundary, which forms the balance of the western boundary.

The Inyo Mountains WSA is near the northern end of the CDCA between Owens Valley on the west and Saline Valley on the east. The terrain is rugged with elevations ranging from less than 1,000 feet on the Saline Valley floor soaring to 11,101 feet at Keynot Peak. Local relief commonly exceeds several thousand feet with many deep and inaccessible canyons and numerous spectacular cliffs and rock exposures. Access into this area is limited due to this rough landscape.

The WSA contains the southern portion of the Inyo Mountains just south of and adjacent to the Inyo National Forest. It is within the Intermountain Sagebrush and American Desert Provinces as defined by Bailey and Kuchler. The vegetation within this unique area is very diversified with the lower elevations containing creosote, annual grasses, and low desert shrubs. Along the moderate elevations, Joshua trees are found. Higher up in the vegetative sequence, dense stands of pine and juniper with scattered forests of bristlecone pine can be found. This WSA contains the densest and most extensive bristlecone pine forest within the CDCA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2.	<u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> ---	58,392	acres recommended for wilderness
		47,843	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

Partial wilderness (54%) is the recommendation for this WSA. The 47,843 acres in this WSA which are recommended as nonsuitable are released for other uses than wilderness. A total of 58,392 acres are recommended for wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally-preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The suitable portion of the WSA possesses wilderness values which, by far, exceed the criteria specified in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964. In addition, the area contains numerous special features that would benefit from the protection wilderness designation offers.

The suitable area has been influenced primarily by the forces of nature. The high, steep-sided face of the Inyo Mountains have acted as a rugged barrier, precluding entry to all but the most determined, and ensuring that the area's pristine character endures. Within this craggy mountain range, one can find ample opportunities for outstanding solitude. These remote peaks are far removed from man's societal influences. The canyons are steep and form great pockets of isolation. The suitable portion of this WSA also has outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The interior canyons are virtual fortresses which only the most expert wilderness traveler should attempt to negotiate. Many such challenges await the primitive recreationist who visits the Inyo Mountains. The suitability recommendation will preclude any further vehicular use of approximately 17 miles of primitive access routes of travel.

The suitable area contains numerous special features. Within these mountains, one can see desert bighorn sheep and elusive Inyo Mountain salamanders. These slopes also provide habitat for a number of State-listed and BLM sensitive plant species. Historic and prehistoric sites are found throughout. These special features are explained in further detail in the Wilderness Characteristics section.




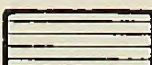


Although this area exemplifies outstanding wilderness values, wilderness designation will conflict with exploration and development of the extensive mineral resources found in these mountains. Within the suitable portion of the WSA, areas exist which have been classified as having high potential for the occurrence of talc, gold, lead and silver. There are also areas with

moderate potential for the occurrence of copper, zinc, rare earths, gold, cobalt, and geothermal resources within the suitable area. This conflict was recognized in the decision-making process but the decision was made that the value of the wilderness resources within this unit outweighed the value of the mineral resources.

The nonsuitable portions of the area, although they met the 2(c) criteria of the Wilderness Act, did so only marginally. The nonsuitable portions of the WSA are natural in character but are far less impressive than the suitable portion. These areas possess opportunities for solitude, however, due to their relatively open terrain, these opportunities are not as outstanding as in the suitable area. Both nonsuitable areas are more open and offer the wilderness traveler fewer, less challenging opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

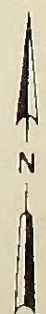
Within the nonsuitable areas, locations classified as having moderate potential for the occurrence of silver, lead, and zinc exist. A large area in the southern nonsuitable portion has moderate potential for rare earths. Development of these mineral reserves will continue under the nonsuitable proposal.



- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------|
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | PRIVATE |

**Inyo Mountains
Proposal
MAP-1**

0 1 2 3
MILES



CDCA-122
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	106,235
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		833
Private		27
Total		<u>107,095</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	58,392
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>58,392</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	47,843
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness.		<u>47,843</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The suitable portion of the area has been influenced by natural forces. The majestic Inyo Mountains, which rise from one of the driest, hottest valleys in the United States, crest at the top of Keynot Peak at an elevation of over 11,000 feet in a cool montane ecosystem. Pinyon pine and bristlecone pine forests blanket the higher elevations within the area. The topography of the area is so rugged that access is only available in a few places where the persistent miners of many years past constructed primitive trails to access the minerals found within this highly mineralized area. Remnants of an old historic aerial tramway still exist within

the southern portion of the suitable area. This tram was constructed and used from 1911 through 1930 to haul salt out of Saline Valley, transport it over the Inyo Mountains and down the mountains to Owens Lake. The tram and a few mines are the only infringements to naturalness within the entire WSA.

The northern nonsuitable portion of the area is natural in character but is less impressive than the suitable portion of the WSA. The southern portion of the WSA, which is nonsuitable for wilderness designation, also is natural but does contain some minor impacts associated with mining activity and old mining trails.

2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude within the suitable portion of the WSA are outstanding. The wilderness traveler can find absolute solitude within this area's steep, narrow canyons. A visitor to this area can become one with nature. The Inyo Mountain crest stretches for twenty miles, all of it virtually unspoiled wilderness.

Opportunities for solitude can also be found within both the north and south nonsuitable portions of the WSA.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The eastern face of the Inyos appears forbidding to most wilderness travelers. Hikers, attempting to traverse most of the canyons on the eastern side will encounter waterfalls--most dry, some with a trickling of water--100 feet high or more which impede pedestrian travel in this area, if not precluding it entirely. Access from the western side is somewhat easier, however. From the Inyo's crest, the wilderness traveler has the opportunity to branch off into the WSA at any point to explore this rugged area. The northern portion of the area is truly inaccessible by any type of vehicles and can only be traveled on foot.

The nonsuitable portions of the area have opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, although these areas are not as spectacular as the suitable portion of the WSA. The topography is less severe and the ruggedness diminishes as one travels from the suitable portion into the nonsuitable areas.

4. Special Features: The Inyo Mountains WSA is considered extremely sensitive for cultural and historical values. Both historic and prehistoric sites are known to exist within this area. Prehistoric sites include lithic scatters, pine nut gathering areas, and associated occupation sites. Current Native American concerns for

this portion of the Inyo Mountains are high to moderate based on the availability of pinyon and other seasonally collected wild plant resources.

Eight historic mining sites are located within the WSA. The most unique, the Saline Valley Salt Tram, is still in evidence in the south-central portion of the suitable area. The salt tram transported salt from Saline Valley over the Inyo Mountain Range and down to Owens Lake. The tram stations and cables are still in place within the WSA.

Some or all of these sites representing human occupation may be eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

Desert bighorn sheep, a BLM sensitive species, occurs in the area. Also found in the area are Inyo Mountain salamanders, also classified as BLM sensitive. The salamanders inhabit riparian areas in Willow Creek, McElvoy Creek, Hunter Canyon, Beverage Canyon, Keynot Canyon, and Craig Canyon.

This WSA covers a wide range of vegetation types and includes a number of unusual plant assemblages. Riparian areas--cottonwood/willow streamside association--are present in many of the canyons along the eastern slope of the Inyo Mountains. In the same area, abundant outcroppings of limestone support calciphyle plant assemblages, many of which contain rare limestone endemic species. Lastly, the stand of bristlecone pine on the higher reaches of the Inyo Mountains are an outstanding example of this species.

Numerous sensitive plants are located in this WSA. The following species, found in the Inyo Mountains, are classified as BLM sensitive species: Caulostraminia jageri, Phacelia amabilis, Perityle inyoensis, Eriogonum microthecum var. panamintense, and E. eremicola. One State-listed species, Dedeckera eurekensis, can also be found in this WSA.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System
(NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 57,381 acres of the Intermountain Sagebrush/juniper-pinyon woodland and 48,854 acres of the American Desert/Saltbush-Greasewood ecosystems. The vegetative sequence within the area starts at the desert floor with creosote bushes and desert shrubs, then rises to Joshua Trees and follows up into the majestic peaks of the Inyo Mountains in the high elevations where the Bristlecone pine forests exist. This ecotonal area exhibits both the influence of the Mojave Desert and the mesic environments found in more northern parts and is considered a valuable addition to the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	4	81,301	74	2,093,472
American Desert/ Saltbush-Greasewood	0	0	7	200,445
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
Intermountain Sagebrush/ Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	3	61,701	18	308,002
American Desert/ Saltbush-Greasewood	0	0	7	200,445

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of six major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of ten BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is the John Muir Wilderness, managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), 20 miles west of the area.

C. Manageability

The Inyo Mountains WSA is manageable as wilderness. Although the topography lends itself well to wilderness, there are a few issues which will complicate management.

The number of mining claims located in the suitable portion, 107 as of December, 1987, will add to the complexity of management of this area. Claims that possess valid existing rights could continue with mining activities that are necessary and reasonably incidental to the mining operation, even after wilderness designation occurs. The only restrictions placed on these activities is that they not cause unnecessary or undue degradation, leaving sufficient latitude to cause severe impacts to existing wilderness values.

The northern and southern nonsuitable portions of the WSA are also manageable as wilderness. However, the area immediately adjacent to Willow Creek Camp and the talc mines will be difficult to manage if the production of talc in commercial quantities continues. If mineral activity increases within the nonsuitable areas, claims with valid existing rights would cause manageability problems. As of December 1987, 36 recorded mining claims existed within the nonsuitable areas.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Inyo Mountains is located in the BLM Inyo Mountains Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M narrative in the wilderness section of the CDCA plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980, stated that the WSA is highly mineralized throughout and contains known deposits of talc, gold, silver, copper, and lead. In addition, the BLM G-E-M narrative stated that areas in the WSA have a high probability of undiscovered deposits of cobalt, nickel, platinum, molybdenum, talc, gold, silver, copper and lead. As of December 12, 1979, seventy unpatented mining claims located in the WSA were recorded with the BLM.

The 1980 BLM GRA report, file data and field verification study fully support the 1980 EIS G-E-M statement. The mines and prospects located in the WSA are encompassed by the Beveridge Gold Mining District. Past reported production from the district is in excess

of \$500,000, principally from the Keynot Mine. Two large areas in the central portion of the WSA, between Keynot and Daisy Canyons were classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a high potential for the occurrence of gold. A smaller area in the extreme northern portion of the WSA was also classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a high occurrence potential for gold. The 1980 BLM GRA report classified an area on the east side of the Nelson Range, northwest of Blackrock Well, as having a high potential for the occurrence of silver and lead.

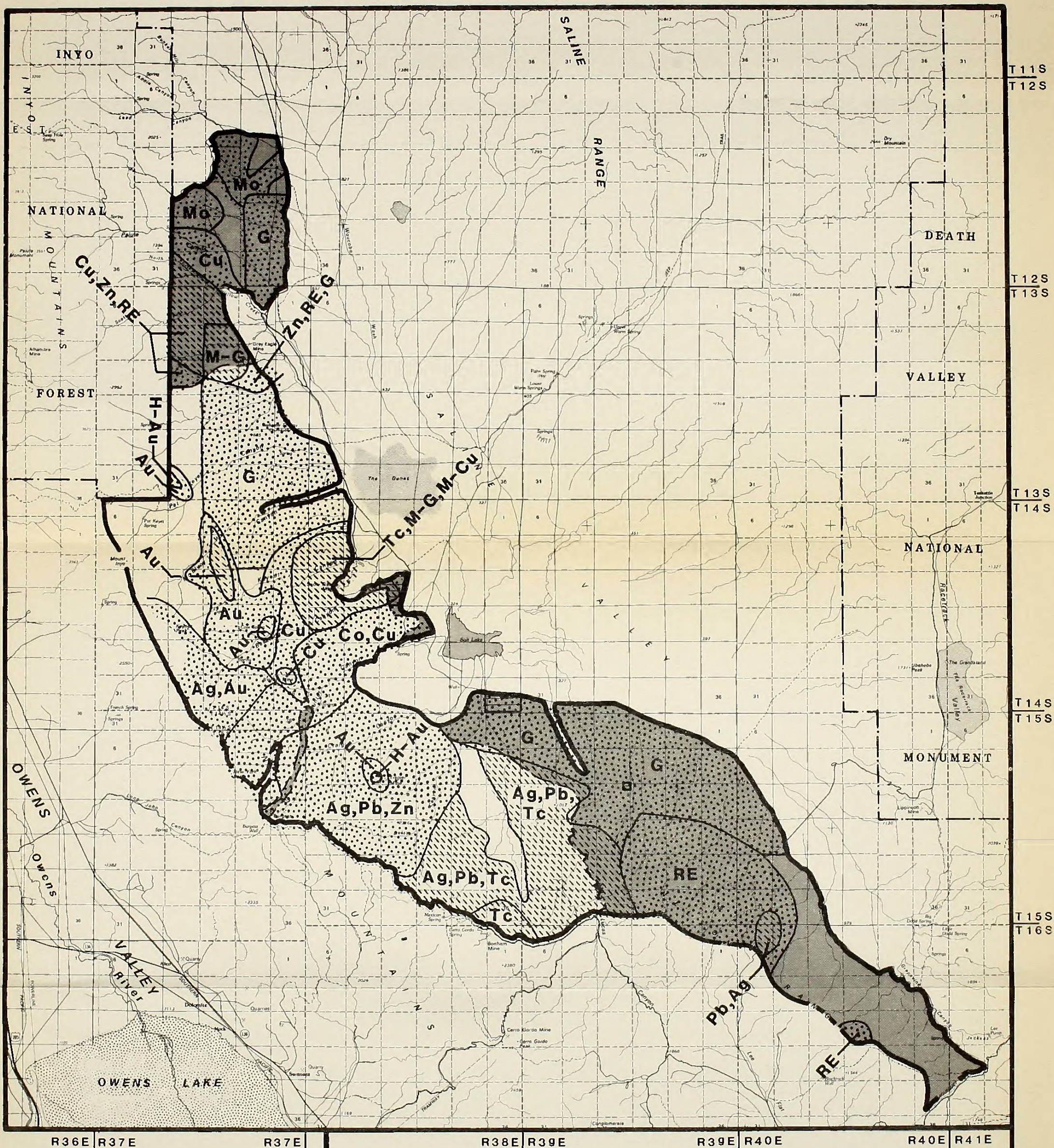
A majority of the WSA, excluding the high occurrence potential areas, was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a moderate occurrence potential for metallic minerals. Two areas in the northern portion of the WSA were classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of molybdenum, copper, zinc and rare earth minerals. The central and southern portions of the WSA were classified for a moderate occurrence potential of copper, cobalt, gold, silver, lead, zinc and rare earth mineralization in various areas as shown on Map 2.

The 1980 BLM GRA report also classified three areas in the WSA as having a high potential for the occurrence of talc based on significant past production, known reserves and a favorable geologic environment.

A large area in the eastern-central portion of the WSA was classified by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS, Conservation Division, 1979) as a Potential Geothermal Resource Area (PGRA). The 1980 BLM GRA report cited the USGS classification as the basis for a moderate potential occurrence classification for geothermal resources. A small portion of the north central area is considered as having a high potential for occurrences of geothermal, sodium, potassium and borate minerals. The remainder of the WSA was classified as having a geologic environment unfavorable for the formation of geothermal resources and oil and gas deposits.

The 1980 BLM GRA report assigned a low potential for the occurrence of saleable mineral resources, namely sand and gravel, to the young alluvial deposits in the southeastern portion of the WSA. The remoteness of the location and the high cost of transportation to a market area was cited as the reason for the low potential occurrence classification.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: From 1981-1984, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) conducted independent mineral surveys of the recommended suitable portion of the WSA. The BOM survey, (Mineral Land Assessment MIA 18-85) was incorporated into a combined report (Bulletin-1708-A) published by USGS in 1985. The following summarizes the results of the combined report.



<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px;"> <div> Recommended for Wilderness</div> <div> Recommended for Non Wilderness</div> <div> Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness</div> <div> Split Estate</div> <div> State</div> <div> Private</div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px;"> <div> High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals</div> <div> Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals</div> <div> M Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area</div> <div> H High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area</div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px;"> <div>Commodity Symbols</div> <div>Ag Silver</div> <div>Au Gold</div> <div>Co Cobalt</div> <div>Cu Copper</div> <div>G Geothermal</div> <div>Pb Lead</div> <div>Mo Molybdenum</div> <div>RE Rare Earth</div> <div>Tc Talc</div> <div>Zn Zinc</div> </div>
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Inyo Mountains

Mineral Resource Potential

0 1 2 3

MILES

MAP-2

CDCA-122

The USGS combined report stated that 54 of the 84 mines and prospects within the recommended suitable portion of the WSA have some significance. The identified resource with the most value is gold, followed by silver and talc. The BOM identified 4.4 million tons of gold-vein resources with 1.1 million oz. of gold and 3.2 million oz. of silver at five localities. An additional three localities have about 280,000 tons of identified silver-vein resources containing about two million oz. silver; 27 additional occurrences have about 1.2 million tons of poorly defined, smaller, or lower grade gold and silver deposits. Four localities were identified to have about 240,000 tons of talc resources. USGS stated that the Inyo Mountains lie within a province characterized by hydrothermal deposits containing lead, zinc and silver, and local gold-quartz veins.

Within the suitable portion of the WSA, the occurrence of base and precious metal deposits containing lead, zinc, copper, gold, silver, tungsten, molybdenum, and talc, are indicated by known production from mines, geological and geochemical evidence. The USGS combined report generally agrees with the 1980 BLM GRA report for areas of mineralization and the types of minerals expected to be found within the WSA. However, USGS assigned a moderate occurrence potential classification to much of the 1980 BLM GRA high occurrence classification area in the central portion of the WSA between Keynot and Hunter Canyons. The USGS high occurrence potential areas were much smaller.

The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG), completed a Mineral Land Classification for precious, base and industrial minerals for lands encompassed by, and surrounding the WSA. The preliminary draft of the report was released to the BLM in February, 1988 for Bureau use and is subject to change. The following is a summary of that study.

The northern two-thirds of the WSA was evaluated in the CDMG study. The entire study area encompassed by the WSA was classified by the Division of Mines as having a moderate to high potential for the occurrence of precious and base metal mineralization. Selected areas in the northern, central and southern portions of the study area were classified as having a moderate to high potential for the occurrence of talc. Extensive deposits of sand, gravel, limestone and dolomite outcropping within the study area were identified by CDMG, but a low occurrence potential was assigned due to the remoteness of the WSA and the prohibitive distances to market. The CDMG report further supports the 1980 BLM GRA study and the USGS and BOM studies identifying the WSA as extremely mineral rich area with a high potential for the exploitation of known deposits and a high potential for the occurrence of undiscovered mineral resources.

The accompanying Mineral Resource Potential map is a composite of the above mentioned studies standardized in accordance with the BLM classification system.

Since 1980, five Plans of Operation for mineral exploration, development and production on pre FLPMA claims located in the WSA have been filed with the BLM Ridgecrest Resource Area. Four of the plans addressed proposed operations at the Keynot Mine. Unpatented mining claims located within the WSA are shown in Table 4 which was taken from BLM mining claim records as of December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	102	29	131	2,040	580	2,620
Placer	2	7	9	80	280	360
Mill Site	3	0	3	15	0	15
Total	107	36	143	2,135	860	2,995

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: In the suitable portion of the WSA, the values will, for the most part, be maintained. In some areas, continued development of mining claims with valid existing rights will cause adverse impacts to naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. In the nonsuitable portion of the WSA, a loss of naturalness caused by development of locatable minerals would also occur.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for locatable mineral exploration and development could suffer significant adverse impacts in the designated wilderness. No new claims would be allowed to be staked within the area. Existing claims, determined to possess valid existing rights, would be allowed to be developed in a manner reasonably incidental to the mining operation. In the nonsuitable portions of the WSA, exploration and development of mineral resources would continue subject to current BLM regulations and Federal laws.
3. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep: Habitat for desert bighorn sheep, located in the suitable area, would be maintained under wilderness designation. However, development of valid mining claims would have site specific impacts on habitat. Site specific surface disturbance related to mineral development would also reduce habitat in the nonsuitable areas.
4. Impact on Inyo Salamander: The Inyo Salamander habitat would be maintained in the area recommended suitable for wilderness. However, habitat could be adversely impacted if mining activities disturb large areas and make use of on-site water, a required element of the habitat of this species.
5. Impact on Native American Values: Access to Native American collection areas and ritual sites will be restricted within the northern and southern portions of the area if designated wilderness.

This adverse impact would be offset to some degree by the protection afforded to spiritual values and ritual sites for many generations to come. Traditional pinyon and plant fiber gathering activities could still be allowed within the area after wilderness designation, although they may be limited by the reduced access.

6. Impact on Historic Mining Sites: Except within areas where valid claims are developed, protection of historic mining sites, the historic Saline Valley Salt Tram and associated facilities would be ensured by wilderness designation. In the nonsuitable areas, historic mining sites could be subject to an increased amount of vandalism and removal of historic items because of continual vehicular access.
7. Impact on Sensitive Plant Species and Unusual Plant Assemblages: In the suitable area, these plant's habitats would be maintained in their present condition. Exceptions to this could occur in areas where valid claims are developed. These impacts would be site-specific and mitigated to the extent possible. Habitat in the nonsuitable area may be subject to site-specific impacts caused by mineral exploration and development.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Nearly all respondents recognized the primitive recreational potential and overall integrity of the geological features. Specific comments referred to mining activity and access roads; these were re-evaluated by field checks and are shown on the current maps where appropriate.
2. Study Phase: Of the 42 comments received on this WSA, 27 favored wilderness designation. Protection of wildlife and vegetation was called for, particularly for the Panamint alligator lizard, the black toad, the limber pine and the bristlecone pine. Special concern was shown for maintaining the integrity of the eastern face of the Inyo Mountains. Scenic qualities, geology, and history were emphasized. The area's contiguity to USFS Rare II lands and Death Valley National Monument was noted several times as conducive to management and protection of a complete ecological unit. Hiking,

camping, and backpacking were primitive recreational activities suggested for this area. One boundary proposal was made -- to move the western boundary to the foot of the Inyos so as to exclude active mining and jeep trails.

Several respondents who opposed wilderness designation mentioned the existence of mining activities within the area and nearby. Potential for mining lead, zinc, silver, and gold was felt to detract from the area's wilderness potential. Another concern listed by opponents to wilderness was the potential for grazing.

In response to the Public Input Workbook for the Wilderness Study Phase (3/15/79), three letters were received favoring wilderness designation. One letter from the National Park Service (Death Valley) recommended extending the southern boundary of WSA 122 to the road to include the outstanding Joshua tree woodland on the floor of Lee Flat.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: A variety of comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Desert Plan Alternatives. Some indicated complete agreement with the Protection Alternative, while others wanted even more potential wilderness to be recommended as suitable. Wilderness was generally believed to provide protection for the bighorn sheep and the bristlecone pine. Another viewpoint was to approve the amount of wilderness recommended in the Use Alternative. This was the position of the Inyo County Board of Supervisors, who were against wilderness here because of mineral potential.
4. Proposed Plan: Conservation-oriented groups and individuals urged a suitable recommendation for this WSA, along with others recommended in the Proposed Plan. Persons wanting unrestricted access for mining and recreational purposes called for an unsuitable recommendation. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors continued to oppose wilderness for this area.

Hunter Mountain

CDCA 123

HUNTER MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-123)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

26,966 acres

The Hunter Mountain WSA is located in Inyo County in the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest rural communities are Olancho, 50 miles to the southwest, and Lone Pine, 70 miles to the west. The area is composed of 26,609 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and 357 acres of State lands. No private or split estate lands are located within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northernmost boundary is Lippincott Road which starts at the intersection of Saline Valley Road and continues northeast for four miles where it intersects the Death Valley National Monument (DVM) boundary. The boundary follows the DVM boundary south one mile, west four miles, south for one mile and then follows topographic lines southeast and then south for five miles until it meets a cherrystemmed road. The cherrystemmed road and an adjoining area of land extends into the WSA for two and one-half miles. The boundary meets Hunter Mountain Road at this point and follows the road south and west for six miles until it meets Saline Valley Road. The boundary follows Saline Valley Road northwest for ten miles until it terminates at Lippincott Mine Road completing the WSA boundary.

The WSA is very diverse. Landforms vary from the flat uniform valley floor to the rugged mountain tops that adjoin Hunter Mountain. The terrain includes smooth canyon walls, jagged rock outcrops, and canyons and valleys, some with lush vegetation associated with the numerous springs in this area. Because of the broad range of elevations (from 2,000 to 7,000 feet), the area contains a wide range of vegetation and plant species. The area is characterized by both hot and cold desert vegetation, as well as pinyon and juniper. Major plant associations include creosote bush, black brush, sagebrush, and pinyon-juniper woodland in the higher elevations. Riparian vegetation is very common, due to the presence of permanent springs and seeps. Among the more important springs are Big and Little Dodd Springs, Jackass Spring, Dead Horse Spring, and several unnamed springs in Grapevine Canyon.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan, protection, use, balanced, and no action, and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

20,065 acres recommended for
wilderness
6,579 BLM acres recommended
for nonwilderness

Partial wilderness (74% suitable) is the recommendation for this WSA. The 6,579 acres in this WSA recommended nonsuitable are released for uses other than wilderness. No private or State inholdings need to be acquired in this area. The majority suitable portion consists of public lands. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The partial-wilderness recommendation is based upon the following rationale: (1) the area recommended for wilderness exhibits primeval naturalness and exceptional ecological diversity; (2) the recommended wilderness provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation; (3) although wilderness designation will create conflict with the area's mineral potential, it was determined that the area's wilderness values are more significant than its mineral values, and (4) the portion recommended for nonwilderness has only marginal wilderness values.

The entire suitable portion of the WSA exhibits primeval naturalness. Elevation gain from the low desert to the pinyon/juniper-covered mountains is over 5,000 feet. Steep, rugged canyons interspersed with small mountain peaks abound within the interior of the WSA. Precious water from springs and seeps can be found within the interior of the area.

The nonsuitable western portion of the WSA is natural, but does not have the primeval aspects that the suitable portion contains. The eastern nonsuitable portion of the WSA has mines and adits which detract from the naturalness of the area. A benched and bladed vehicle route leads to a wollastonite mine. The open pit wollastonite mine exists in the northeastern portion of the nonsuitable area, drastically affecting this portion of the WSA. Mining exploration has occurred within this area. Exploration routes leading to areas which have been drilled and scraped in an effort to show mineralization are quite evident throughout the area. There are approximately 14 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

The suitable area has outstanding opportunities for solitude. The diverse landforms, sheer rugged canyons, and varied vegetation provide effective screens to isolate users and render a feeling of absolute solitude and quiet.

The western nonsuitable area has solitude, but it cannot be considered outstanding when compared to the suitable portion of the area. This entire eastern area is an alluvial fan which extends from the mouth of Grapevine Canyon. Its lack of topographical features lessen the solitude within the area. The Saline Valley Road which forms the western boundary is used regularly by heavy trucks which haul talc out of Saline Valley. These trucks cause considerable dust and noise as they travel out of the valley and up the alluvial fan.

The suitable portion of the area has outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. This rugged parcel of wilderness is six miles long and seven miles wide and is highly convoluted with canyons and small mountain peaks. The availability of water from springs and seeps in this otherwise parched environment allows travelers the opportunity to continue their quest for wilderness with ample water supplies.

The two nonsuitable portions of the area have opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, but they are not as challenging as the suitable portion of the area.

The recommended suitable portion contains large areas of apparent moderate to high potential for lead, zinc, gold, silver, copper, and wollastonite. It is likely that some of the 70 claims in the recommended suitable area contain developable resources. However, the area's wilderness values are so significant as to outweigh its mineral development potential, although development of valid claims could result in severe adverse impacts to wilderness values (see Manageability).

Most of the area judged to have high potential for Wollastonite is in the northeast segment recommended for nonwilderness, where there is an open pit Wollastonite mine inside the WSA.



A horizontal number line representing miles. It has tick marks at 0, 1, 2, and 3. The word "MILES" is written below the line.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	26,609
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		357
Private		0
Total		<u>26,966</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	20,030
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>20,030</u>
Inholdings ¹		
State		35
Private		0
		<u>20,065</u>
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	6,579
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>6,579</u>

¹Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The suitable portion of the WSA has primeval naturalness, untouched by the hand of man.

The nonsuitable western portion of the area is predominantly natural, but does not have the outstanding characteristics of the suitable portion of the area. This portion is composed of a very broad alluvial plain which has been deposited from outwash from Grapevine Canyon.

The eastern nonsuitable portion of the WSA has scars of man's past activity. The Spanish Spring area has old mine workings, vehicle routes, trails, and stock watering improvements which take away from the naturalness of the area. A bench cut route starts at Hunter Mountain Road and continues along the eastern portion of the WSA for six miles, ending at a wollastonite deposit which has large open pits where ore has been extracted. Bulldozed trails branch off of this main route where mineral exploration was attempted.

2. Solitude: The suitable portion of the WSA offers abundant opportunities for solitude. The wilderness traveler will find sheer and rugged canyons and a variety of vegetation. The higher elevations within the area contain pinyon/juniper forest which provide screening as well as a buffer from noise and other aspects of man along the southern boundary.

Solitude can be found within the western nonsuitable portion of the area, but is not considered to be outstanding. The broad alluvial plain which makes up the western nonsuitable portion of the area spreads out from Grapevine Canyon and has reduced opportunities for solitude because of its flat topography and scarcity of vegetation. The eastern nonsuitable portion of the area has aspects of solitude, but they cannot be described as outstanding.

This WSA is periodically overflown by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The primeval character of the suitable portion of the WSA offers outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. This rugged block of public land is six miles long and seven miles wide, offering wilderness users outstanding opportunities for exploring the area and testing their wilderness skills. The availability of water at springs and seeps within the main canyons provides additional benefits to the traveler in his quest for a wilderness experience. An old mining

trail starts in Grapevine Canyon and continues through the heart of the WSA until it exits into DVM on the northern border. The trail system makes use of terrain and springs to enable the wilderness traveler to better negotiate the steep terrain of the area.

The western nonsuitable portion of the area is not as challenging to the wilderness user. Primitive and unconfined recreation can occur within this area, but because of its lackluster topography and lack of vegetative screening does not provide as good an opportunity. The eastern nonsuitable portion of the area is for the most part flat to rolling, and lacks the outstanding qualities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

4. Special Features: The suitable area in Hunter Mountain WSA contains desert bighorn sheep, which is a BLM-listed sensitive species. The area contains eight percent of the Hunter Mountain bighorn herd's range. It is a highly critical area for this species and provides a corridor for movement between the Inyo and Last Chance herds.

The suitable and nonsuitable portions of the Hunter Mountain area overlap three areas of cultural resource sensitivity, and part of one area of Native American sensitivity. Almost the entire WSA is enclosed within one or more of these areas. The integrity of the known sites is high at the present time. Because Hunter Mountain itself is considered sacred, there are ritual healing areas scattered throughout the entire northwestern slope of the mountain. It is also a source of ritual-use plants, as well as pinyon nuts. It remains of great concern to contemporary Native Americans.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The Hunter Mountain WSA contains 26,609 acres of the American Desert Province, Juniper-pinyon woodland (Juniperus-Pinus) vegetative assemblage, as defined by Bailey and Kuchler. Its blend of the creosote scrub and pinyon-juniper vegetative communities, and high elevation Basin Range mountainous terrain would add ecological diversity to the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	24	680,502
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	16	459,251

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers California</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 11 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Golden Trout in the Sequoia and Inyo National Forests, 40 miles to the west.

C. Manageability

The Hunter Mountain WSA is manageable as wilderness. The suitable portion of the WSA is manageable as wilderness because of its large configuration which is six miles long by seven miles wide. Very few impacts of man have changed the primeval aspects of this area. The rough terrain makes the recommended wilderness impregnable to off-highway vehicles.

Significant portions of this WSA have moderate to high potential for gold, silver, lead, zinc, copper, and wollastonite (See Energy and Mineral Resource Values). The WSA has 105 mining claims, two-thirds of which are in the recommended wilderness area. In view of the area's mineral potential, it is likely that some of these claims would withstand a validity examination, making their development possible within a designated wilderness. To assure the long-term protection of existing high quality wilderness values, it may be necessary to acquire the valid mineral rights within the area designated wilderness. Otherwise, naturalness and opportunities for solitude will suffer if future mineral development occurs. A large Wollastonite deposit with proven reserves is contained primarily within the northeastern area recommended for nonwilderness. Open-pit mining has already occurred here, and if development continues, wilderness values could be completely lost in this area.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Hunter Mountain WSA (CDCA-123) is located in the BLM Saline Valley Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M data in the Wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 indicated that the WSA contains known reserves of wollastonite and has a medium to high potential for the occurrence of lead, copper, gold, tungsten, and uranium. A speculative potential for sand and gravel and placer gold was also indicated. At least 31 unpatented mining claims were known to be recorded with BLM on December 12, 1979.

The BLM GRA file data in 1980, although not analyzed, integrated and interpreted in a GRA report, supports the G-E-M evaluation in the EIS. The GRA file indicated that 100% of the high and over 90% of the moderate potential for the occurrence of metallic locatable minerals was within the BLM recommended suitable portion of the WSA, as shown on Map 2. The file indicated that an area associated with granitic intrusive in contact with Paleozoic marine sediments in the north and central portion of the WSA had a high potential for the occurrence of lead and gold with identified resources. Two areas, one surrounding this high potential area and another along the

south-southeastern boundary of the WSA, were classified as having moderate potential for the occurrence of copper. The rest of the WSA, except for alluvium along the western boundary, was classified as having a favorable geologic environment for the occurrence of metallic minerals.

According to the GRA file, a small area associated with granitics and Paleozoic marine sediments in the northwestern portion of the WSA was classified as having a high potential for the occurrence of wollastonite, a nonmetallic locatable mineral used in the ceramic industry to reduce firing time and conserve energy. The western one-third of this potential wollastonite area is within the BLM recommended suitable portion of the WSA. The remainder of the WSA was not classified for nonmetallic minerals due to insufficient data. The northern three-fourths of the WSA was classified as having a favorable geologic environment for the occurrence of uranium and thorium, while the southern one-quarter may have a favorable geologic environment. Data was insufficient to classify this southern area. The files indicated that there was insufficient data to classify the WSA for geothermal steam or sodium/potassium. A narrow strip in the alluvium along the western boundary of the WSA was classified as having moderate potential for the occurrence of saleable minerals such as sand and gravel. The alluvium between this moderate potential and the western boundary of the BLM recommended suitable area was classified as a favorable geologic environment for the occurrence of common mineral materials (e.g., sand and gravel), while the rest of the WSA to the east had insufficient data to be classified.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: Between 1981 and 1983, the Bureau of Mines (BOM) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) conducted mineral surveys of the suitable portion of the WSA. In 1983, BOM published a preliminary report, MLA 105-83, which supports the GRA file data and the EIS.

This report indicated that the WSA was within the Ubehebe Mining District, in which four mines north of the WSA had combined historic production of 5,625,501 pounds of lead, 347,649 pounds of zinc, 31,880 copper, 84,837 troy ounces of silver and 303.4 troy ounces of gold. The report indicated that 14 of 19 inactive mines or prospects identified were in the north-central portion of the WSA. Mines in the east-central and central portion of the WSA (e.g., Monarch, Shirley Ann, Sal), were reported to contain occurrences of silver, lead, copper, tungsten and molybdenum in contact zones between granitic intrusive and Paleozoic carbonate rocks. The report indicated that the J.O. Mine, adjacent to the northeast corner of the WSA, contains 26 million tons of identified wollastonite reserves. The entire deposit surrounding the J.O. Mine may contain as much as 200 million tons of wollastonite. In the northern part of the WSA, the Eureka quartzite was reported to

contain more than 99% silica, a locatable mineral. The Lippincott Mine, approximately one-half mile north of the WSA, was a major lead-zinc-silver producer.

In 1984, USGS published the results of their mineral survey of the BLM recommended suitable area, along with the data collected by BOM, in a joint open file report, OFR 84-638. Compared to the GRA files, the USGS report reduced or eliminated the mineral potential of the WSA and emphasized zinc and silver in the moderate to high potential areas instead of gold and copper. The report indicated areas with moderate to high resource potential for lead, zinc, and silver which were significantly smaller than the areas classified in the 1980 GRA file. The report indicated that the high potential area for these metals was entirely outside the northern boundary of the WSA and was centered around the Lippincott Mine. A moderate potential area in the suitable portion of the WSA was based on the extension of the geology of the high potential area into the WSA. The rest of the area along the north-south Ubehebe Trail along with an area in the northeastern portion of the suitable area was classified as low potential for lead, zinc, and silver in replacement bodies, and tungsten, molybdenum, silver, and copper in skarn and vein deposits. The report indicated an area of moderate potential for wollastonite within the high potential classification area of the 1980 GRA report.

The BLM requested public comments on OFR 84-638. The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) responded, requesting that additional areas in the north and northeastern portions of the WSA be classified as having moderate resource potential for lead, zinc, silver, copper, tungsten, and gold, and upgrading the moderate mineral potential areas in the report to high potential for the same metals and moderate potential for copper, gold, and tungsten. This recommendation was based on the presence of discontinuous base metal skarn deposits between granitic intrusive and Paleozoic carbonate rocks which are known to exist over the central portion of the WSA and are believed to exist at depth, as well. The CDMG recommended that the wollastonite resource in the northeastern portion of the WSA be increased in size and the USGS and BOM classification be reclassified from a moderate to a high potential, due to drilling data which indicated at least 25 million tons of proven reserves and 225 million tons of probable ore.

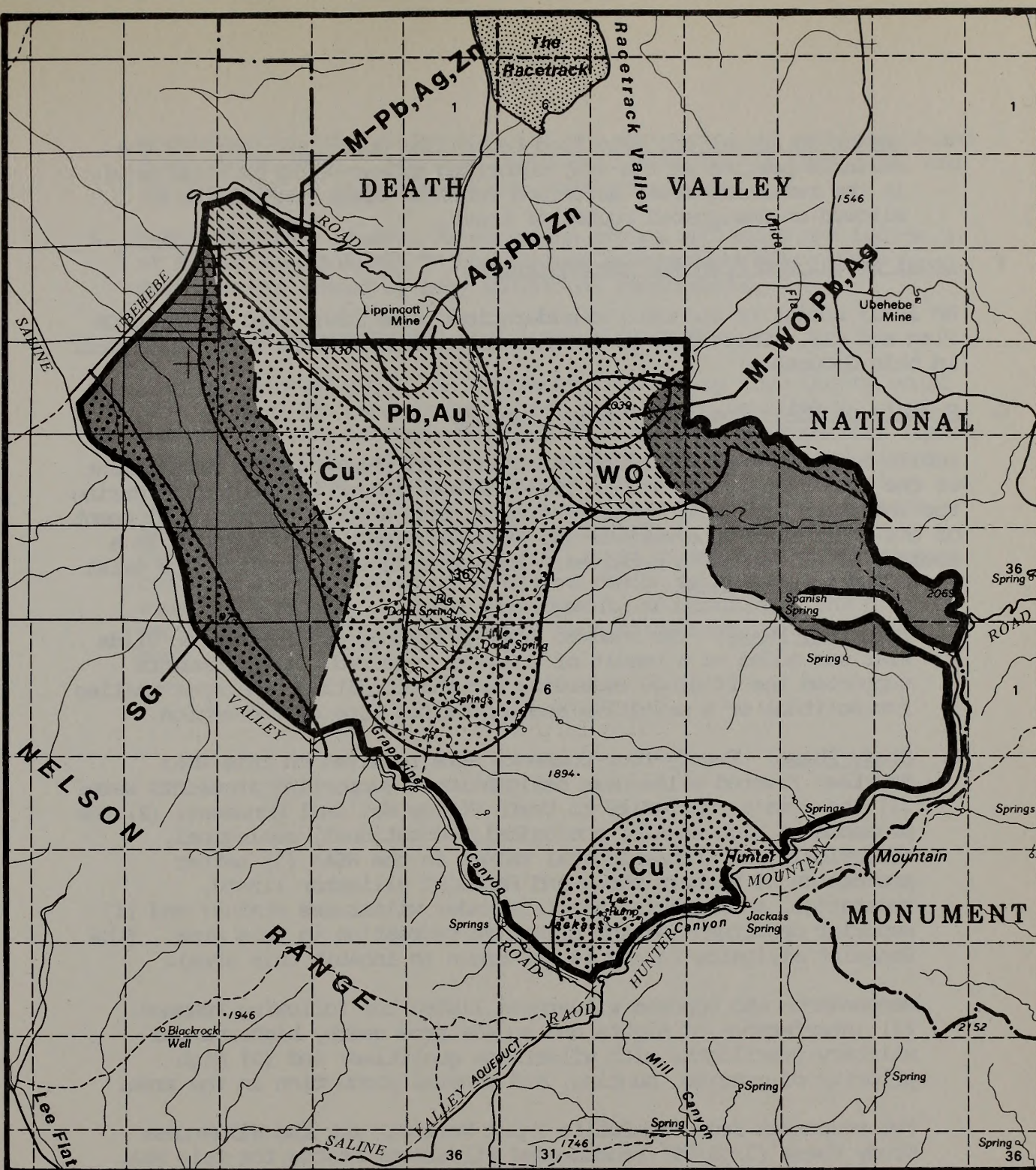
A CDMG comment letter of December 1985, indicated that the Interpace Corporation, the principal producer of wollastonite in the U.S., may mine this deposit in the future, since the current deposits in New York are being depleted. Exploration operations within the suitable portion of the WSA have been conducted under approved plans of operation. A mining plan of operations had been filed with the BLM to develop the Wollastonite resources in the recommended suitable portion of the WSA. Mineral interest in the WSA is further indicated by the following unpatented mining claim information (Table 4) taken from BLM records dated December, 1987.

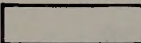

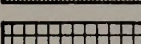
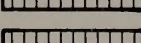
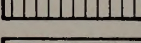
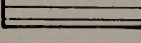
Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	10	26	36	200	520	720
Placer	59	7	66	2,360	280	2,640
Mill Site	1	2	3	5	10	15
Total	70	35	105	2,565	810	3,375


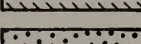
E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Although the wilderness area will be withdrawn from mineral entry, some of the existing mining claims may prove to have a valid discovery, allowing development to proceed with associated negative impacts on wilderness values, unless valid rights can be acquired. Otherwise, wilderness values would be protected on the area to be designated wilderness. On the area to remain nonwilderness, wilderness values will decline over the long term as a result of mineral exploration and development, particularly on the known Wollastonite deposit on the east side of the WSA.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: The portion of the WSA designated wilderness would be withdrawn from mineral entry, precluding further exploration. Development of 70 existing mining claims will be subject to proof of a valid discovery. The nonsuitable portion of the WSA, containing 35 mining claims and including a previously worked portion of a wollastonite deposit, will be unaffected by the proposed action.
3. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep Habitat: The portion of the habitat contained within the recommended wilderness would receive permanent legislative protection from activities that alter the natural environment. Some minor, site-specific impacts on sheep habitat could occur within the wilderness if any valid mining claims are developed, and in the nonwilderness as a result of continuing mineral exploration and mining.
4. Impact to Native American Values: The areas of greatest religious significance will be included within the wilderness. Because the extremely rough topography effectively precluded motorized access to the Hunter Mountain area in the past, access methods to traditional gathering and religious sites would not change as a result of wilderness designation. Within the nonsuitable portion of the area, sites used by Native Americans for gathering plant materials could be affected by mining exploration and development in site-specific areas. Sacred features would be protected under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Any changes in physical appearance or use of sacred sites will be made only in consultation with the appropriate Native American group.



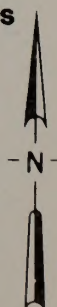
-  Recommended for Wilderness
-  Recommended for Non Wilderness
-  Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
-  Split Estate
-  State
-  Private

Explanation

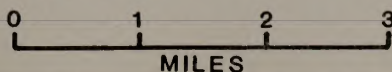
-  High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
-  Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- Au** Gold
- Ag** Silver
- Cu** Copper
- Pb** Lead
- SG** Sand & Gravel
- WO** Wollastonite
- Zn** Zinc



**Hunter Mountain
Mineral Resource Potential**



**MAP-2
CDCA-123**

5. Impact on Access and Motorized Recreation Opportunities: In the suitable portion of the WSA, motorized access would be eliminated. In the remaining area, motorized vehicles could continue to be allowed on designated routes of travel.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: The road to Spanish Springs and further to Ulida Flat was added as a result of comments received. Other comments supported the findings regarding natural condition and opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.
2. Study Phase: Twenty-four comments were received on this WSA; fourteen favored wilderness designation. Supporting arguments were: (1) the area's contiguity to Death Valley National Monument; (2) the presence of high scenic, ecological, educational, geological, historical, and archaeological values in the WSA; (3) better protection of bighorn sheep and Panamint alligator lizard, vegetation, and riparian habitats under wilderness status; and (4) superior opportunities for primitive recreation in this area. (The Panamint alligator lizard is not known to inhabit this area).

Respondents who opposed wilderness listed the following reasons:

- (1) interference of sights and sounds from nearby highways and military overflights with wilderness qualities; and (2) high priority of grazing, hunting, and mineral production in the area.

Two responses from the Public Input Workbook for the Wilderness Study Phase (3/15/79) recommended wilderness status for this WSA. One letter cited the contiguity of this potential wilderness area with WSAs CDCA-117 and CDCA-117A and with proposed wilderness areas in Death Valley National Monument.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: A wide assortment of comments on the area included the following: (1) preference for Protection Alternative; (2) request that WSA 123 be recommended for wilderness in the Balanced Alternative; (3) request for a reduction in the amount of wilderness in Saline Valley; (4) the need for continuing vehicle

access routes into wilderness; (5) the importance of exploration and development of oil, gas, and geothermal resources in this area; and (6) the need to reduce the burro population here.

4. Proposed Plan: Several conservation groups applauded the inclusion of Hunter Mountain WSA in the list of recommended WSAs. This position was echoed by many individual respondents.

No comments were received from local governments.

5. Plan Amendments, 1982: An amendment proposed by Inyo County would have changed the recommendation for this WSA to unsuitable. One hundred and five letters responded to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on this issue; 100 were against the proposal and five in favor. Five more letters replied to the Final EIS, four against and one in favor. The reasons for opposition were the same as those given throughout development of the CDCA Plan. One opponent recommended making the area an ACEC (area of critical environmental concern) for protection of sensitive resources, while allowing access for grazing, mineral development, and hunting. The proposal was rejected due to the extremely high wilderness value of the area.

APPENDIX 1
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION
HUNTER MOUNTAIN WSA (CDCA-123)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				TOTAL ACREAGE	NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	
	TWNSHP	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN			SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)
1	15S.	40E.	16	MDM	35	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	N/A

These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.

Cerro Gordo Peak

CDCA 124

CERRO GORDO PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

(CDCA-124)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

54,204 acres

The Cerro Gordo WSA is located in Inyo County in the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest communities are Darwin, California, nine miles southeast; Ridgecrest, California, 56 miles south; and Lone Pine, California, 24 miles to the west. The WSA includes 54,081 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 114 acres private land and 9 acres State land. No split-estate lands area located within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

Beginning approximately two miles northeast of the community of Keeler, on the western side of the study area, the northern boundary of the WSA is a county-maintained road which trends towards Cerro Gordo Peak through Lucas Canyon. The eastern boundary is South Lucas Canyon Road which joins White Talc Mine Road. A cherrystem provides four miles of access to the Santa Rosa Mine and the Malpais Mesa. The southern and western boundaries avoid active mines then generally follow topographic contours one-half to two miles east of State Highway 190 until the boundary meets the county-maintained road to Lucas Canyon.

The WSA includes an area eight miles wide and 13 miles long situated between Owens Dry Lake on the west; Inyo National Forest to the north; China Lake Naval Weapons Center on the south; and Death Valley National Monument on the east. The WSA contains 40% mountains, 40% plateaus, 15% dissected fans, three percent hills and two percent alluvial fans. The study area is composed primarily of the southern end of the rugged Inyo Mountains. The terrain varies from gently sloping bajadas to steep, rugged interiors. Focal features of the area are the volcanic Conglomerate Mesa and Malpais Mesa, and a portion of the Talc City Hills. Elevations range from 4,200 feet to 7,562 feet.

The study area falls within the broad classification of the American Desert province. Vegetation within the WSA consists of creosote and low desert shrubs scattered on the lower slopes of the Inyo Mountains. Pinyon pine and juniper exist in the northern areas grading into a Joshua tree assemblage on the lower flats adjoining the eastern side of the WSA. No BLM sensitive or Federal or State listed rare, threatened, or endangered plant or wildlife species are known to occur in this WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Various suitability recommendations were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS. Two different suitability recommendations were analyzed in the EISs: partial wilderness (96% suitable) and no wilderness.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0 acres recommended for
wilderness
54,081 BLM acres recommended
for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Cerro Gordo Peak WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation because its mineral potential and opportunities for motorized recreation outweigh the area's wilderness values. Although the area possesses wilderness values that satisfy the criteria set forth in Section 2(c) of the 1964 Wilderness Act, they are not distinctive enough to override the area's other values nor warrant inclusion into the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS).

The WSA is within the Cerro Gordo Mining District. The study area shows a moderate to high occurrence potential for a variety of minerals including gold, silver, lead, zinc, copper and talc. Since the early 1800's, the lands within and adjacent to the WSA have supported a number of mining operations. Numerous patented mining operations are in existence within or on the fringe of the WSA boundary. As of December 1987, 423 mining claims were still active within the study area.

The WSA has good recreational resources for hiking, backpacking, sightseeing, and rockhounding. Hunting for mule deer and upland game occurs in the higher elevations. There are approximately 20 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. Because of the ruggedness of the area, off-highway vehicle (OHV) activity has traditionally been restricted to established jeep trails and ways. Wilderness designation would close approximately 18 miles of routes within the WSA.

The naturalness and opportunities for solitude within this WSA only minimally meet the criteria defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. The location of the area adjacent to China Lake Naval Weapons Center and areas of current mining development make it difficult to escape the sights and sounds of civilization.

These outside sights and sounds detract from the sense of solitude and remoteness to be experienced within the area.

Overall, the WSA offers no outstanding features or single attraction of special significance. In terms of uniqueness, the landforms and ecosystems reflected in the surrounding mountains are typical of most mountainous areas within the eastern portion of the California Desert. The addition of the

Cerro Gordo Peak WSA to the NWPS would not add to the diversity or uniqueness of the system, nor would it add significantly to the wilderness recreational opportunities available in the region.

The resource values in the WSA would be best managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's limited and moderate use guidelines coupled with restrictions outlined in existing management plans serve to lessen potential impacts to resources within the WSA.



T16S

T17S

T17S

T18S

T18S

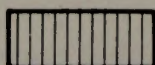
T19S

R38E R39E

R39E R40E

NONE

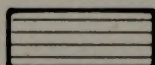
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



SPLIT ESTATE



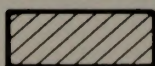
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NONWILDERNESS



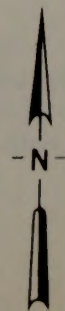
STATE



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



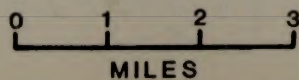
PRIVATE



Cerro Gordo Peak

Proposal

MAP-1



CDCA-124
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	54,081
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		114
Private		9
Total		<hr/> 54,204

<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<hr/> 0

Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0

<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	54,081
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<hr/> 54,081

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The 18 miles of primitive routes and the old mines, adits, and mining portals associated with them negatively impact the naturalness of the WSA. The rugged interior area shows few signs of man's presence and its naturalness.

2. Solitude: The varied landforms and the diverse vegetative patterns provide numerous areas of isolation. The network of spaces generated by mountainsides, rock outcrops, depressions and pinyon-juniper and Joshua tree cover provide ample opportunities for solitude within the WSA.

Existing mining activities adjacent to the WSA boundary limit the opportunities for solitude.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: There are numerous opportunities for primitive forms of recreation (i.e., backpacking, hiking and nature studies) because of the large spaces involved and the natural screening of the topography. The combination of constantly changing landscape from the lowlands of the east and west to the rugged volcanic lava flow of Malpais Mesa adds to the ruggedness of the area. Deep canyons, sheer mountain sides, meadows and mesas can all be found within the area.
4. Special Features: Wildlife species occurring in the WSA include approximately ten square miles of mule deer habitat. An additional 14 square miles are also used as a foraging area by a nesting pair of golden eagles. The habitat considered most favorable for wildlife is centered around Conglomerate Mesa and the adjacent Inyo Mountains.

The WSA includes prehistoric and historic aboriginal sites and many kinds of mining sites from the 19th and 20th centuries. Native American use includes seasonal camps and the exploitation of plant and crucial resources. The area has been traditionally occupied in the spring and summer by both Great Basin Shoshone and local Paiute Indians from the southern Owens Valley. It continues to be used by Native Americans for religious purposes.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 54,081 acres of the American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland (*Juniperus-Pinus*) ecosystem. Designation of the study area would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Other suitably recommended WSA's throughout the CDCA offer a more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

<u>Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Juniper- Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	24	653,030
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Juniper- Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	16	431,779

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hourcountymajor population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of eight BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is the John Muir Wilderness Area administered by the Inyo National Forest and located 30 miles west of the Cerro Gordo WSA.

C. Manageability

The WSA is manageable as wilderness; however, the maintenance of wilderness values would be hampered by conflicting resource uses involving mining, unclear boundaries and enforcement of vehicle closure.

Roughly 15% of the WSA is encumbered by mining claims. Because the study area and the surrounding lands show a moderate to high potential for a variety of minerals, it is probable that a high percentage of the area's 423 mining claims would withstand a validity exam. Development would severely degrade wilderness values.

The southern and western boundaries follow topographic contours and are not discernable on the ground. Manageability would be enhanced with signing at appropriate intervals.

Eighteen miles of routes would be closed to OHV access. It would be difficult to manage such closures because of the traditional patterns of use which have been prevalent for over a generation.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary

Suitability Recommendation: The Cerro Gordo Peak WSA is located in the BLM Talc City Hills Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M narrative in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980, stated that mines in the WSA have produced large amounts of gold, silver, lead, zinc, copper and talc and the WSA has potential for additional discoveries of these minerals and uranium. As of December, 1979, approximately forty unpatented and twenty patented mining claims located in the WSA were recorded with the BLM.

The 1980 BLM GRA report and file data fully support the EIS G-E-M statement. Mines and prospects in the northern portion of the WSA are encompassed by the Cerro Gordo (lead-silver-zinc) Mining District. The total recorded production from the Cerro Gordo district has amounted to 23,966,020 lbs. zinc, 4,581,937 oz. silver, and 73,128,860 lbs. lead. The Morning Star Mine, located in the WSA south of Cerro Gordo, has produced 120,000 oz. silver, 1,550,000 lbs. lead, 500,000 lbs. copper and 250,000 lbs. zinc. In the south central portion of the WSA, the Santa Rosa mine group has recorded production of 12,000,000 lbs. lead, 490,000 lbs. zinc and 427,000 oz. silver. Numerous mines and prospects, including the Keeler, Old Timer, and the Perry Smith, are located on the west slope of the Inyo Mountains within six miles of Keeler and have produced a minor amount of gold, silver, lead, zinc and copper (production figures from the 1980 BLM GRA file).

The northern area of the WSA was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a high potential for the occurrence of lead, silver, and zinc. The area surrounding the Santa Rosa Mine, an area in the northwestern portion of the WSA, and an area on Conglomerate Mesa were also classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a high potential for the occurrence of lead, silver, zinc and gold. In addition, the 1980 BLM GRA report noted that the limestone and dolomite outcrops in the western portion of the WSA are often associated with economic deposits of gold, silver, lead and zinc in the Inyo Mountains.

The extreme southwestern portion of the WSA was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a low potential for the occurrence of uranium. The GRA file documents a slight geochemical anomaly, a favorable geologic environment and an exploration claim block as the basis for the classification.

The 1980 BLM GRA report classified the southern tip of the WSA as having a high potential for the occurrence of talc and a low potential for the occurrence of limestone and dolomite. The extensive limestone deposits in the northern and western sections of the WSA were also classified as having a low occurrence potential for industrial mineral applications.

The California Department of Transportation maintains and operates a sand and gravel extraction site adjacent to State Highway 190 in the southern tip of the WSA. The 1980 BLM GRA file assigned a (1979) value of \$30,000.00 to the stockpiled material at the site and classified the alluvial deposit containing the pit as having a high occurrence potential for sand and gravel. The 1980 BLM GRA report and file data did not classify the WSA for sodium, potassium, oil, gas and geothermal resources.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral surveys have been conducted in the WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) completed a Mineral Land Classification of an extensive area, including the Cerro Gordo area, to the north and east of the WSA. Preliminary results of the study have been made available for Bureau use and are subject to change. In general, the CDMG study characterized the entire Cerro Gordo area as having a moderate potential for future discoveries of gold, lead, silver and zinc based on an extremely favorable geologic environment, the extensive nature of mineralization throughout the entire area, and the demonstrated historic mining activity.

Since 1980, three plans of operation addressing an ongoing geologic, geochemical and subsurface drilling program on two areas in an extensive claim (482) block located in the Cerro Gordo area and the WSA have been received by the BLM Ridgecrest Resource Area. The majority of activity has taken place near the Morning Star Mine. Preliminary results submitted to the Ridgecrest Resource Area demonstrate a high potential for the occurrence of gold and silver in this area.

The Mineral Resource Potential Map (Map 2) is a composite of the above information standardized to the BLM classification system.

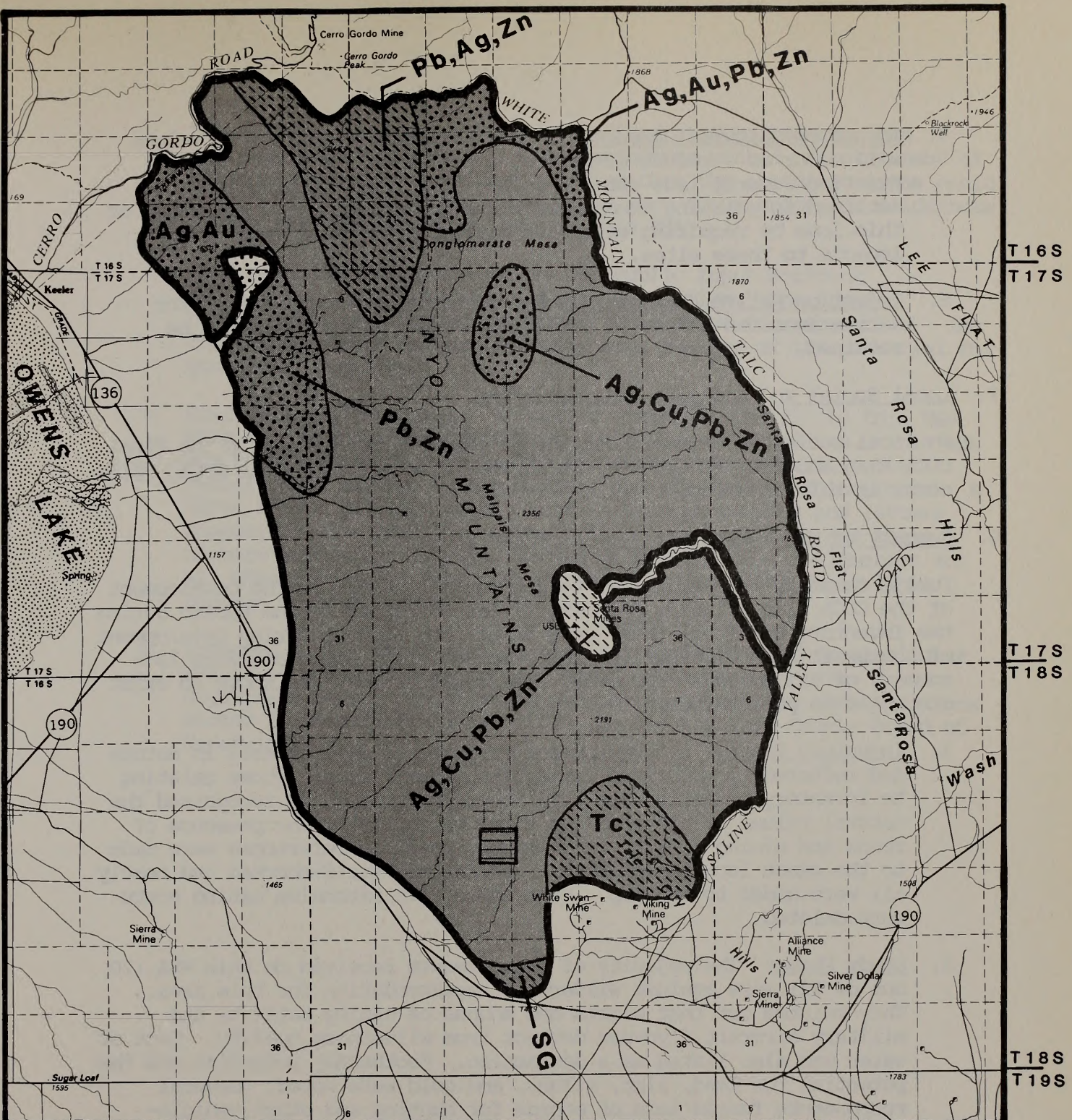
Further mineral exploration and development interest is indicated by the following unpatented mining claim data taken from BLM mining claim records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	422	422	N/A	8,440	8,440
Placer	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mill Site	N/A	1	1	N/A	5	5
Total	N/A	423	423	N/A	8,445	8,445

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Existing solitude would gradually decline with projected, gradually increasing OHV use of the area. Noise and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development could result in a gradual decline in these values.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: The proposed action will have no impact. Further exploration, as well as development of the 423 existing mining claims, may proceed subject to a notice or a plan of operations following regulations outlined in 43 CFR 3809 and using specific guidelines as contained in the CDCA Plan.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the CDCA Plan.
4. Impact on Mule Deer Habitat: Localized impacts caused by vehicle use and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development could occur. Management guidelines in the CDCA Plan along with enforcement of State laws would help provide protection of this species.



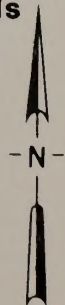
NONE	Recommended for Wilderness
	Recommended for Non Wilderness
	Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
	Split Estate
	State
	Private

Explanation

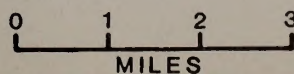
	High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
	Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
M	Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
H	High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

Ag	Silver
Au	Gold
Cu	Copper
Pb	Lead
Zn	Zinc
SG	Sand & Gravel
Tc	Talc



**Cerro Gordo Peak
Mineral Resource Potential**



**MAP-2
CDCA-124**

5. Impact on Cultural Resources: Some loss of archaeological values will occur as a result of mineral exploration and development. Existing Federal laws and BLM policy along with restrictions outlined in existing management plans would lessen the magnitude of this loss by requiring extensive mitigation or avoidance of any impacts to these sites.
6. Impact on Native American Values: Vehicle-dependent access for Native American access to traditional religious sites would be retained.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: A large number of comments were general in nature and referred to motorized recreational activities. Those relating to inventory criteria were split between those which recognized the natural values of the area and those which listed the presence of roads and mining activity. Some very specific references were made to the exact location of roads. These were field-checked and nearly all were added to the map. Some areas with extensive mining scars were deleted.
2. Study Phase: The majority of the comments received on this WSA (20 out of 32) were against wilderness recommendation for this area. They pointed out that sights and sounds of mining activity and military aircraft flyovers detract from wilderness quality. Lack of water was also listed as a detraction. Geothermal potential and the potential for lead, zinc, silver, and gold were noted. Several respondents feared loss of access for hunting and other vehicle-dependent activities.

Twelve respondents favored wilderness designation. Malpais Mesa and Conglomerate Mesa were mentioned by four respondents because of their unique geologic and biologic features. Other outstanding features were the Joshua tree woodland at Santa Rosa Flat, and the unusually abrupt transition from sparse vegetation near Owens Lake

to well vegetated pinon-juniper woodland at Conglomerate Mesa (three-fourths air miles). Two respondents wanted reinstatement of the deleted northern portion, stating that the abandoned mines could be rehabilitated. Three rare plants were recommended for wilderness protection (not known to occur in this WSA).

Four responses were received to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). Two favored wilderness designation. One urged continuation of existing motorized vehicle use for recreation. The fourth opposed wilderness for this area because of its potential for geothermal resources.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. This WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rock hounding, and off-road vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons and letters supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for this area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Panamint Dunes

CDCA 127

PANAMINT DUNES WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-127)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

109,403 acres

The Panamint Dunes WSA is located in Inyo County in the Northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest community is Trona, located about 36 miles to the south. The WSA includes 106,807 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and 2,596 acres of State lands. There are no private or split estate lands within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northernmost boundary of the WSA is Death Valley National Monument (DVMN). The boundary follows the DVMN boundary for 17 miles southeast until it meets State Highway 190. The boundary follows State Highway 190 west for nine miles until it intersects with the Big Four Mine Road - a cherrystemmed road - which enters the interior of the WSA for eight miles. The boundary continues west along State Highway 190 for 15 miles. At this point the boundary trends north going cross-country for nine miles until it meets Hunter Mountain Road. The boundary follows Hunter Mountain Road for six miles until it meets the DVMN boundary.

The suitable portion of the WSA consists of the northern portion of Panamint Valley, the playa of the northern portion of Panamint Dry lake, the surrounding Panamint Mountains on the eastern one-third of the area, and Darwin Plateau on the western side of the WSA. A unique focal point within the central portion of the area is the Panamint Dunes. It is a unique, pristine and untrammelled sand dune complex. Star and crescent shaped dunes lie within this complex which is approximately one and one-half miles wide and two and one-half miles long. The dune complex rises approximately 275 feet from the surrounding terrain. This is one of nine major sand dune complexes within the BLM managed portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). Elevations within the WSA range from as low as 1,560 on the playa of the North Panamint Dry Lake to 7,318 feet within the mountain ranges which surround the WSA. Lake Hill is a prominent land mark within the southeastern portion of the WSA. This small range of hills jutting out of the playa of Panamint Dry Lake gives the illusion of a small mountain range or an island transposed in the shimmering heat waves of the summer season.

The nonsuitable portion of the area lies on the western portion of the area on the Darwin Plateau. This area is a flat to rolling plateau with open grasslands. Within the northwest portion of the area an old road system exists which was the access route to Hunter Mountain.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection,

use, balanced and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS. The plan amendment was proposed in 1987 to provide for increased ORV use in the area. The proposal was not implemented.

2. <u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> ---	92,993	acres recommended for wilderness
	16,181	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

Partial wilderness (79% suitable) is the recommendation for this WSA. The 16,181 acres recommended nonsuitable in this WSA are released for uses other than wilderness. In addition to Federal acreage recommended for wilderness, BLM recommends that 2,367 acres of State land be acquired through exchange and designated as wilderness. With exchange of these inholdings, a total of 92,993 acres are recommended for wilderness. Appendix 1 lists all inholdings and provides additional information on their acquisition. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally-preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The portion of the WSA recommended suitable far exceeds the criteria specified in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The suitable portion of the area is being recommended because of the following:

(1) outstanding naturalness, solitude, and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation; (2) special features; (3) ease of manageability; and (4) lack of conflict with other resource users.

The naturalness within the suitable portion of the area is outstanding and has primeval character. Very few routes exist within the area. Because wilderness values are so significant, the suitability recommendation will preclude any further vehicular use of approximately 14 miles of primitive access routes of travel. The only road which enters the WSA is a cherrystemmed road extending from Highway 190 for eight miles. The nonsuitable portion of the area is natural, but has an access road system in the northwestern portion of the area which reduces naturalness somewhat.

Solitude within the suitable portion of the area is outstanding. The configuration of the WSA with its deep valley and mountains, which surround the area, offer the wilderness traveler an opportunity to encounter outstanding solitude. The Panamint Sand Dunes offer the wilderness voyager the opportunity to find outstanding solitude within a pristine environment of sand dunes. Primitive and unconfined recreation is outstanding within the suitable portion of the area. The wilderness traveler has the opportunity to roam through the entire WSA and not see the works of man. The only exception to this is a cherrystemmed road which enters into the WSA along the eastern side of the North Panamint Dry Lake. This cherrystem stretches into the WSA for eight miles in the southwestern portion of the area. A limiting factor for primitive and unconfined recreation is water;

no potable water has been found within the WSA. The deep highly dissected canyons of the Panamint Range offer outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The nonsuitable portion of the WSA has opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation but is not considered as outstanding as within the suitable portion. The Darwin Plateau forms the bulk of the topography within the nonsuitable area. The area is flat to rolling and offers the wilderness user little in the way of outstanding primitive and unconfined recreation.

The majority of the WSA has little mineral potential. Within the suitable portion, a small area of high potential for volcanic cinders is found along Highway 190, near Panamint Springs. Another area of high mineral potential is near the Big Four Mine where zinc, gold, silver and lead occur. Moderate mineral potential exists for limestone in the southeast area of the WSA. A moderate potential for lead, zinc, and silver is predicted for three small areas near Dolomite Canyon, Rainbow Canyon, and an unnamed canyon east of the Darwin Plateau.

In the nonsuitable portion of the WSA, a pocket of high mineral potential for silver, lead, and zinc, is found near Lee Wash on the Darwin Plateau. A small area of moderate potential for the same minerals is found in an unnamed canyon on the east side of the nonsuitable area. The remainder of the WSA is not mineralized.

The suitable portion of the WSA is unique within the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). Very few, if any, WSAs have a large sand dune system which is surrounded on three sides by mountains and high plateaus. The nonsuitable portion of the WSA is not unique within the NWPS. The flatness of the topography and the marginal wilderness values do not add anything to the wilderness character of the area.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM (surface and subsurface)		106,807
Split Estate (BLM surface only)		0
Inholdings		
State		2,596
Private		0
Total		<u>109,403</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM (within WSA)		90,626
BLM (outside WSA)		0
Split Estate (within WSA)		0
Split Estate (outside WSA)		10
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>90,626</u>
Inholdings ¹		
State		2,367
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		
BLM (surface and subsurface)		16,181
Split Estate (BLM surface only)		0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>16,181</u>

¹ Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The suitable area has outstanding naturalness throughout. The sand dunes are in a pristine condition and show no unnatural qualities. The Panamint Mountains are in a natural condition and are adjacent to DVNM. The western portion of the suitable area is totally natural and consists of alluvial plains and washes which have eroded out of the Darwin Plateau. Panamint Dry Lake lies within the south-central portion of the area.

The nonsuitable portion of the area is natural, but is not as outstanding as the suitable area. An old access system lies within the northern portion of the area and forms a division between the suitable and nonsuitable areas.

2. Solitude: The suitable portion of the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude. The configuration of the WSA, with its deep valley and mountains surrounding three sides, offers great opportunities for solitude. The wilderness traveler can use the cherrystemmed Big Four Mine Road to gain vehicle access into the interior of the WSA and then hike to other areas within the WSA.

The nonsuitable portion of the WSA has solitude, but it is not as outstanding as within the suitable area.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The suitable portion of the area has outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The northern portion of Panamint Valley has excellent opportunities for hiking and backpacking, although the lack of water within the area could cause a limitation to the backpackers' ability to stay in the wilderness for an extended period of time. The highly dissected canyons of the Panamint Range offer excellent opportunities for the wilderness traveler to roam unconfined throughout the area. The western portion of the WSA has outstanding opportunities for backpacking within its canyons and alluvial plains. The Panamint Dunes offer the wilderness traveler the opportunities to enjoy a different type of wilderness experience. These dunes offer the soft blending of sand with the harsh, boulder-strewn slopes of the Panamint Mountains.

The nonsuitable portion of the WSA has the availability of primitive and unconfined recreation, but the flatness of the Darwin Plateau offers less opportunities than the suitable portion.

4. Special Features: The Panamint Dunes Wilderness Study Area encompasses all or part of six areas of cultural resource sensitivity and two areas of Native American sensitivity. The area contains a relatively low density of historic sites; however, there is a very high density of rare and unique prehistoric sites. Known site types include occupation sites, hunting and temporary camps, lithic and tool workshops, rock art sites (petroglyphs and possibly pictographs), rock shelters, rock alignments and geoglyphs (ground figures). Recent inventory of the southern sub-dune area confirms a very high density and wide range of sites which represent many thousands of years of use. The integrity of the known sites is generally quite high.

A population of desert bighorn sheep, a BLM sensitive species, inhabit the Panamint Mountains within the eastern portion of the WSA. One bighorn sheep guzzler provides permanent water for this herd.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 106,807 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. The Panamint Sand Dune complex is unique within the California Desert Conservation Area. This sand dune system is surrounded on three sides by mountains and high plains. Cultural values in and around the sand dune system are extensive. Unique geoglyphs occur within various portions of the WSA.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,752	117	4,161,102
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,752	88	3,547,298

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of fifteen BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Golden Trout Wilderness, managed by the Forest Service, 50 miles to the west of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Panamint Dunes WSA is manageable as wilderness.

The Panamint Dunes and Panamint Dry Lake system within the central portion of the WSA is currently closed to all motor vehicles. This makes vehicle closure under wilderness designation a much easier administrative transition.

Under wilderness designation, the recorded mining claims would be evaluated for validity. If proven valid, development of claims would create site-specific manageability problems by reducing wilderness values.

Once officially designated wilderness, an administrative determination will be made to provide for maintenance of the bighorn sheep guzzler.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Panamint Dunes WSA is located in the BLM Talc City Hills Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M narrative in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) of 1980 stated that lead, silver, zinc, copper and sand and gravel have been produced from the WSA and the potential for uranium, sodium, potassium, oil, gas, iron and gold also exist. As of December 12, 1979, one unpatented mining claim located in the WSA was known to be recorded with the BLM.

The BLM GRA report and file data fully support the 1980 EIS statement. The Big Four Mine on the west slope of the Panamint Range in the eastern portion of the WSA, has produced 155,872 pounds of lead, 117,204 pounds of zinc and 1,217 ounces of silver from 566 tons of ore (1980, BLM GRA file). The 1980 BLM GRA report classified the recommended suitable portion of the WSA surrounding the Big Four Mine as having a high potential for the occurrence of lead, silver and zinc. In the extreme western portion of the WSA (recommended nonsuitable), the area surrounding the Lee Mine was classified in the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a high potential for the occurrence of lead, silver, zinc, gold, and copper (See Map 2). According to production figures documented by the 1980 BLM GRA file, the Lee Mine group has produced 44,574 ounces of silver, 22,278 pounds of lead, 98,840 pounds of zinc, 1,592 pounds of copper, and seven ounces of gold.

A small area on the Lake Hill prospect in the southeastern portion of the WSA, was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a moderate potential for lead, silver and zinc based on past exploration and favorable geology. Numerous isolated outcrops on the southwestern portion of the WSA, including the Whipperwill copper prospect north of Panamint Springs, were classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a low potential for the occurrence of metallic minerals. In addition, the south slope of Hunter Mountain, and the western side of the Panamint Range were classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having very favorable rock types (unclassified) often associated with lead, silver, zinc, copper, gold and nonmetallic industrial mineral (limestone, dolomite) deposits.

The 1980 BLM GRA report documented the existence of an intermittently-used, volcanic cinder, borrow pit on the north side of State Highway 190 west of Panamint Springs. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) maintains and operates the pit under a free use permit issued by the BLM. The area surrounding the borrow pit, in the south-central portion of the WSA, was classified in the 1980 GRA file as having a high potential for the occurrence of volcanic cinder.

The central portion of the WSA encompassing the Panamint Valley, the south slope of Hunter Mountain and the northeastern Darwin Plateau was classified as having a low potential for the occurrence of uranium.

The 1980 BLM GRA file data documented a U.S. Geological Survey (USGS, Conservation Division, 1979) classification of the Panamint Valley portion of the WSA as being prospectively valuable for sodium, potassium, oil and gas. Based on this classification and the absence of mineralization in a USGS exploration core hole in the Panamint Lake in the southern part of the WSA, the Panamint Valley portion of the WSA was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a low potential for the occurrence of sodium and potassium.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: The U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) conducted mineral surveys of the suitable portion of the WSA in 1981 and 1983, respectively. In 1985, the BOM released the results of the 1981 study in an open-file report (MLA 15-85). The BOM study results were incorporated into a combined report published in 1984 by the USGS (Open-File Report 84-678). The following summarizes the findings of the USGS/BOM combined report.

The 1984 USGS combined report stated that the WSA has an identified volcanic cinder deposit with inferred reserves of 900,000 tons supporting the GRA high potential classification. In addition, the report indicated that a small area surrounding the Big Four Mine had a moderate potential for the occurrence of lead, silver, and zinc. Areas with low mineral resource potential for lead, silver, and zinc were identified near the Big Four Mine in the recommended suitable portion of the WSA. These classifications downgraded the BLM high potential classification. The Panamint Valley Dune field was identified as a low potential resource for silica sand because of impurities and distance to markets.

The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) reviewed the USGS/BOM combined report and provided additional data concerning mineral resources within the WSA. The CDMG's review supported a moderate potential classification for base metal deposits (low for copper) in the suitable eastern portion of the WSA near Dolomite Canyon. This classification is based upon known replacement deposits in carbonate rocks, and similar geologic environment to known base metal mining districts in the general area. In addition, CDMG indicated that a moderate potential for limestone existed in the recommended-suitable eastern portion of the WSA. Areas in the recommended-suitable southwestern portion of the WSA are considered as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of base metals (low for copper). The remaining portion of the WSA was classified as having an unknown potential for mineral deposits. The accompanying mineral potential map (Map 2) reflects the data provided by USGS, BOM, and CDMG under the BLM classification system.

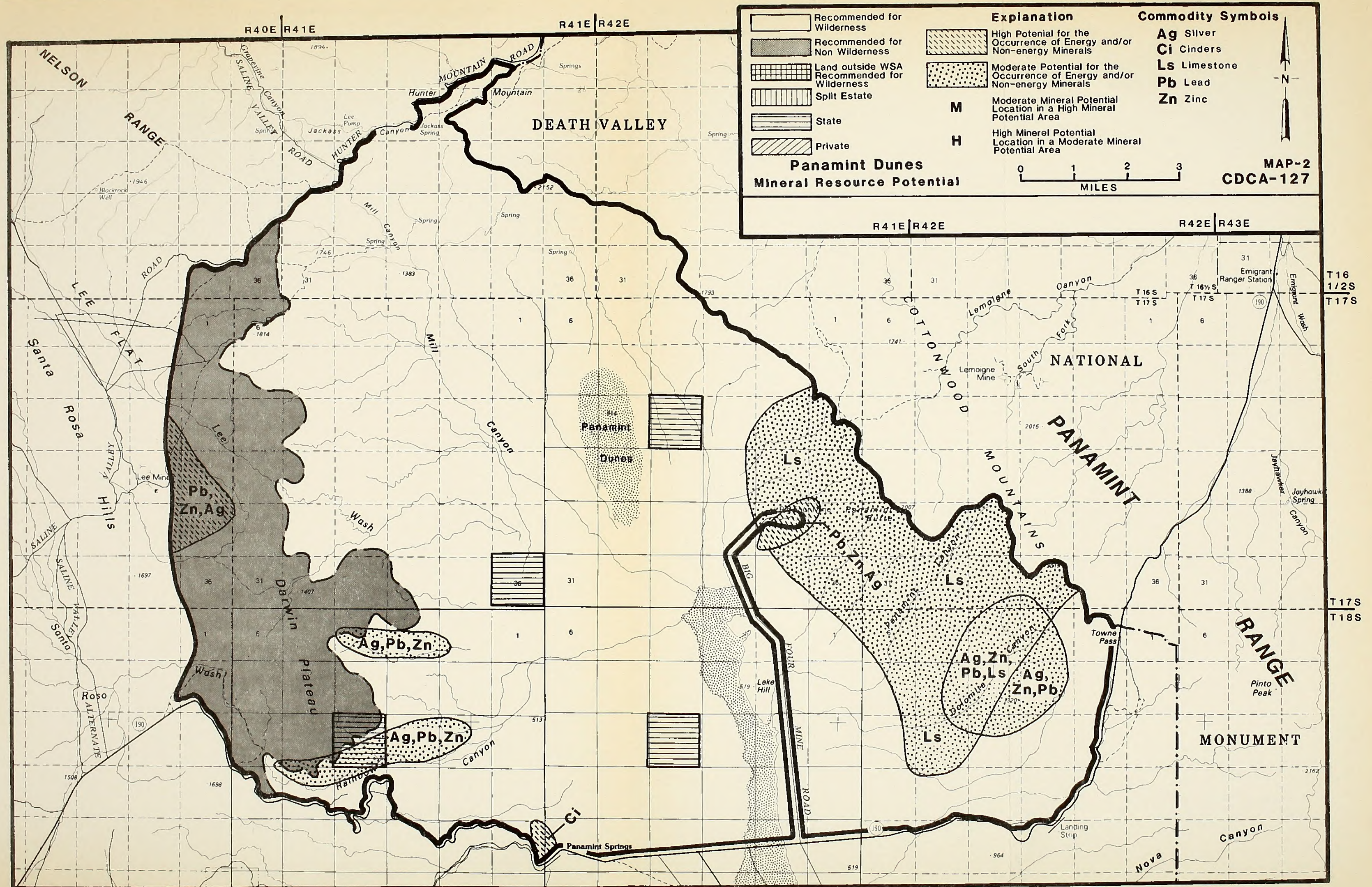
Since 1980, no exploration or mining plans of operation have been filed with the BLM in the WSA. Unpatented lode mining claims are concentrated in the central portion of the recommended-suitable portion, and western recommended-nonsuitable portion of the WSA. Unpatented placer mining claims are located in both the recommended-nonsuitable and suitable north-central portion, and eastern, and western portions of the WSA. Unpatented Mining claims in the WSA are summarized in Table 4 taken from BLM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	11	1	12	220	20	240
Placer	27	1	28	1,080	40	1,120
Mill Site	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	38	2	40	1,300	60	1,360

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences on the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Value: In the suitable portion of the WSA, the values, for the most part, would be maintained. In some areas, continued development of mining claims with valid existing rights could cause adverse impacts to naturalness, and indirectly, to opportunities for solitude and for primitive recreation. In the nonsuitable portion of the WSA, a loss of naturalness caused by development of localized locatable mineral deposits could also occur.



2. Impact on Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for mineral exploration and development would suffer significant adverse impacts in the designated wilderness. No new claims would be allowed to be staked within the area. Existing claims, determined to possess valid existing rights, would be allowed to be developed in a manner reasonably incidental to the mining operation. No leasable mineral development could occur. In the nonsuitable portions of the WSA, exploration and development of mineral resources would continue, subject to current BLM regulations and Federal laws.
3. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep: Habitat for desert bighorn sheep located in the suitable area would be maintained under wilderness designation. Areas not recommended for wilderness may experience a loss of habitat caused by site-specific surface disturbance related to mineral development.
4. Impact on Motorized Vehicle Use: Opportunities for motorized vehicle use within the suitable portion of the WSA would no longer be available once the area is designated wilderness. Within the nonsuitable area motorized vehicle use could continue on designated routes.
5. Impact on Cultural Resources: Cultural resources would be enhanced by wilderness designation within the suitable portion of the WSA. Within the nonsuitable areas, cultural resources would be affected in site-specific places where specific authorized activities take place.
6. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep Habitat: Virtually all of the bighorn sheep habitat within the WSA is within the portion recommended for wilderness. The habitat would therefore receive permanent protection from activities that alter the natural environment. Opportunities for development and maintenance of existing and additional water sources would be provided for, but may be constrained by vehicle use and equipment restrictions.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into

account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Many comments were of a general nature, expressing interest in motorized vehicle recreation. Other comments supported the findings regarding natural condition and primitive recreation opportunities.
2. Study Phase: Twenty-one of the 33 study comments received on this WSA opposed wilderness designation. Many of these noted the frequent military overflights and sonic booms in the neighborhood, which they felt detracted from wilderness qualities. Mineral potential was mentioned specifically for lead, zinc, silver, and gold. The need for motorized vehicle access for recreational activities was another common concern.

Twelve comments favored wilderness designation. Contiguity of the area with proposed wilderness areas in DVNM was a major reason. Superior scenic quality and ecological, archaeological, historic, and geologic values were mentioned. A common concern was protection of wildlife and vegetation of the dunes from destruction by motorized vehicles.

The suggestion was made twice to extend the area's boundary to include adjacent WSAs.

The majority of responses to the Public Input Workbook for the Wilderness Study Phase (3/15/79) favored wilderness designation and protection of the desert tortoise. Also mentioned were (1) extension of the western boundary to include the outstanding Joshua tree woodland in Lee Flat, (2) restriction of motorized vehicles, and (3) a change in the southern boundary to accommodate existing recreational uses.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: The National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway (OHV) vehicle groups recommended that this area be designated unsuitable for wilderness, with the dunes portion open to vehicles. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons and letters supporting the NOC position. Conservation groups supported wilderness designation of the entire WSA. Comments were largely concerned with motorized vehicles - either the need for access for recreation or mineral exploration and development (including oil, gas, and geothermal) or the need to protect the sensitive natural values of the area from vehicular damage.

4. Proposed Plan: Again the comments were largely concerned with motorized vehicle access to the dunes. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed the "locking up of the last sand dune in the County, leaving the ORV recreationists with no dunes for ORV travel." In contrast, a large number of correspondents wished to keep vehicles out of the WSA.
5. 1982 Plan Amendments: An amendment was proposed by Inyo County and by Vance Blair (an ORV recreationist) to open 10,050 acres of the Panamint Dunes portion of the WSA for limited dune buggy use, in order to provide opportunities for this type of recreation for the residents of this region. The Draft EIS of this proposal elicited 365 responses, ten in favor, 352 opposed, and two neutral. Reasons given for opposition were: (1) valuable archaeological sites will be destroyed; (2) damage to environment (species, habitats, cultural resources) will outweigh benefits to recreationists; (3) rare plants and nine species of endemic beetles will be endangered; (4) the heart will be cut out of one of the finest wilderness candidates in the CDCA; (5) BLM's Interim Management Policy for candidate wilderness areas will be violated; (6) present demand for ORV use here is low - this action will attract more ORV's to this sensitive area. Twenty-two organizations opposed the amendment.

State and Federal governmental agencies were also opposed to the amendment.

In response to opinions, an alternative was offered in the Final EIS in which only four sections around the dunes would be opened (2,400) but by permit only. No more than 15 to 20 vehicles would be allowed, and access and camping would be strictly controlled. The "open" designation would be an interim arrangement until final Congressional action on the WSA.

This alternative was approved. However, as a result of an appeal of this decision, to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, the decision was subsequently overturned.

APPENDIX 1
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION
PANAMINT DUNES WSA (CDCA-127)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				TOTAL ACREAGE	NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	
	TWNSHP	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN			SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)
1	17S.	42E.	16	MDM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
2	17S.	41E.	36	MDM	560	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
3	18S.	42E.	16	MDM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
4	18S.	41E.	16	MDM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0

These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.

North Coso Range

CDCA 130

NORTH COSO RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-130)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

10,171 acres

The North Coso Range WSA is located in Inyo County in the northwest portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest communities are Darwin, 12 miles east; Trona 40 miles southeast; Olancho 15 miles northwest; and the Ridgecrest 52 miles to the south. The area is composed of 10,103 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and no acres of State land or split estate lands within the WSA. There are 68 acres of private lands (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northwestern boundary is a four mile stretch of State Highway 190. On the east end of the northern boundary, it jogs south for one mile and then east for one mile until it meets State Highway 190 again. The boundary follows State Highway 190 south for seven miles until it intersects with an unnamed dirt road. The dirt road extends west for two and one-half miles until it converges with another dirt road for six miles which forms the eastern boundary of the WSA.

The WSA contains approximately 40% dissected fans, 30% alluvial fans and 30% hills. Physiographically, the area drains westerly towards Owens Dry Lake. The lowest portion of the WSA is 3,660 feet. The landforms gain elevation in the middle of the area and then levels off and becomes part of Lower Centennial Flat at 4,680 feet. Vegetation is composed mostly of creosote bush and succulent scrub, low desert shrubs and annual plants. No rare or sensitive plant species are known to occur within the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0 acres recommended for
wilderness
10,103 BLM acres recommended for
nonwilderness

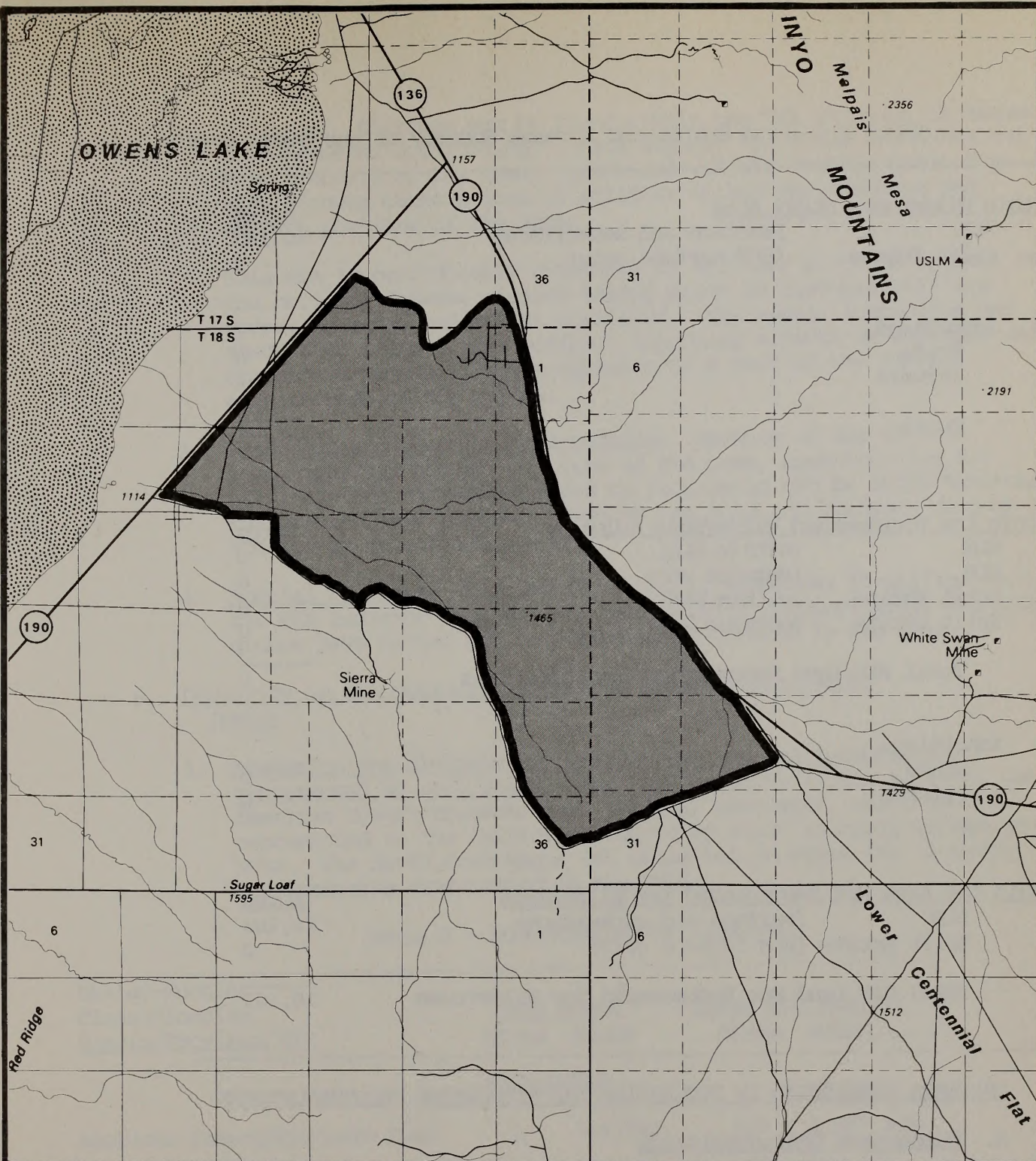
No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts. The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

While the WSA did meet the general criteria of wilderness as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, further studies during the preparation of the California Desert Plan determined that the area's values as wilderness were exceeded for other uses for the following reasons: (1) a moderate potential exists for uranium and cinders within the area; (2) solitude is drastically affected by highway and military aircraft noise; and (3) off-highway vehicles use the area extensively.

Potential for uranium is moderate within the northern two-thirds of the area. If this material becomes scarce, exploration and development could drastically effect the area. Because of required maintenance of State Highway 190, cinders from the WSA will be needed as base material for highway maintenance.

An above-ground power line and buried cable right-of-way located within the WSA causes a loss of naturalness along the eastern boundary of the WSA. State Highway 190 causes a direct loss of solitude to the northern one-third and eastern portion of the WSA due to noise from vehicle traffic.

There are approximately two miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. Off-highway vehicles make use of the area for rockhounding to gather opal. It is also close to the Olancho Dunes Off-Highway Vehicle Open Area and receives spill-over use on the WSA's system of vehicle routes.



R38E R39E

T17S
T18S

T18S
T19S

NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

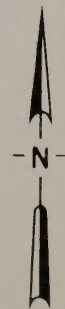
SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

North Coso Range
Proposal
MAP-1

0 1 2 3
MILES



CDCA-130
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	10,103
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		68
Total		<u>10,171</u>

<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>

Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0

<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	10,103
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>10,103</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area has been affected primarily by natural forces, with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable within the majority of the area. Some vehicle routes lie in the northernmost portion of the area. An electrical power line and underground cable are located along the eastern boundary of the WSA and adversely affect naturalness, both rights-of-way weave their way in and out of the WSA along that border. A small route enters the WSA from the eastern border above the Lower Centennial Flat area.

2. Solitude: Solitude can be found within the WSA although it cannot be considered outstanding. State Highway 190 forms the north and east boundary of the area. Truck and vehicle traffic noise from this highway cause a loss of solitude within the northern and eastern portions of the area.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Because of the diverse topography and natural portions of the area, opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation can be found throughout the area. The wilderness traveler can hike and backpack through the area in an unconfined manner.
4. Special Features: Prehistoric cultural resources identified within the WSA indicate camping, and tool making. Historically, Shoshone groups have hunted and collected native plants in the area.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 10,103 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush (Larrea) ecosystem, which is well represented in the California Desert by other suitably recommended WSAs. The North Coso Range WSA would not increase the diversity of the ecosystem represented in the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification <u>Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,257,806
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,664,002

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of five major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of ten BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Golden Trout Wilderness, twenty miles away in the Sequoia National Forest.

C. Manageability

The North Coso Range WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, development of valid mineral values would present management problems. There is a moderate potential for uranium in the northern two thirds of the WSA. The eastern portion of the area has a moderate potential for cinder deposits which would be used to maintain State Highway 190.

Two rights-of-way for a powerline and buried underground cable are present within the eastern border of the WSA. The rights-of-way are in proximity to State Highway 190 and weave in and out of the WSA along this border. If the area is designated wilderness, the boundary should be adjusted to exclude the existing rights-of-way.

The area receives moderate use by off-highway vehicles due to rockhounding and proximity to the Olancho Off-Highway Vehicle Open Area. Because of the existing off-highway vehicle interest within the Wilderness Study Area, the area would have to be actively monitored, patrolled and properly signed to prevent illegal entry and degradation of wilderness values.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

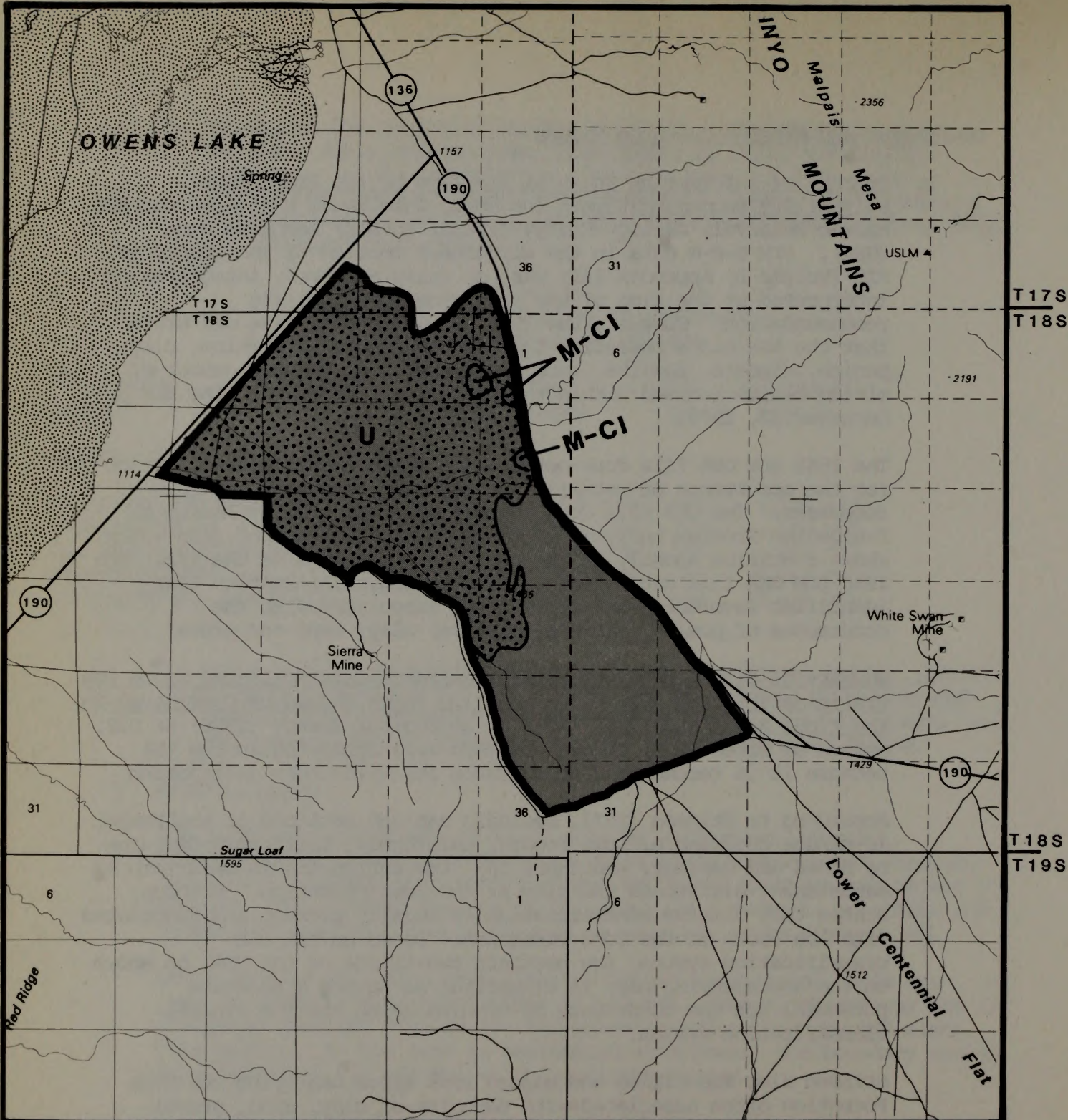
1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The North Coso Range WSA is in the BLM Haiwee Reservoir Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the CDCA plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) was not fully analyzed, integrated or interpreted at the time of the preliminary suitability recommendation. However, the 1968 EIS G-E-M narrative did state that the WSA has a potential for the occurrence of uranium, clay, pumice, cinders, perlite, sand and gravel. An unknown number of mining claims located within the WSA were recorded with the BLM on December 12, 1979.

The 1968 BLM GRA file does not contain a GRA report classification for the occurrence of metallic, nonmetallic or energy mineral resources. The GRA file does contain National Uranium Resource Evaluation Program analysis of stream drainage sediment data which shows a uranium anomaly in the northern two-thirds of the WSA. The 1968 BLM GRA file data also contains geologic information that identifies favorable rock types often associated with the occurrence of pumice, cinders, perlite, clay, sand and gravel.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral surveys were conducted in the WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

According to Stinson (1977, Geologic map and sections of the Keeler 15-minute quadrangle, Inyo County, California, California Division of Mines and Geology, Map Sheet 38), the entire WSA is underlain by sandstones, siltstones and clay of the Coso Formation. Stinson states that uranium mineralization is locally present and associated with the rocks of the Coso Formation. Based on the BLM classification system, the northern two-thirds of the WSA, as shown on the accompanying map, is classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium using the BLM mineral classification system.

Stinson also identified and mapped rock types overlying the Coso Formation often associated with deposits of clay, sand, gravel pumice and perlite and crushed rock. The central one-third of the WSA is classified by BLM as having a low potential for the occurrence of crushed volcanic rock products. The entire WSA can be classified as having a low developmental potential for sand, gravel and clay. Three small, isolated deposits of cinder in the eastern portion of the WSA near State Route 190 were identified and mapped by Stinson. Due to apparent quality of the cinder and the local need for road base materials for the maintenance of State Route 190, the cinder deposits shown on the accompanying map were classified as having a moderate occurrence potential.



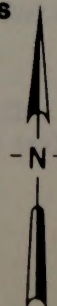
- NONE** Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

Explanation

- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- U** Uranium
- CI** Volcanic Cinders



North Coso Range
Mineral Resource Potential

0 1 2 3
MILES

MAP-2
CDCA-130

In 1983 and 1984, BLM issued approval for a plan of operations and two plan amendments for exploration drilling on the Coso prospect. The Coso prospect consisted of 168 unpatented mining claims located primarily to the southwest of the WSA, but extending into the WSA to the northeast of the Sierra Talc Mine. Actual drilling was not conducted within the WSA, however, a drill hole was located along the boundary road outside the WSA north of the Sierra Talc Mine. Results of the drilling have not been made public. In addition, casual use surface sampling on the Sadarach lode claim northwest of Hill 4568 in the eastern central portion of the WSA has been conducted since 1985. Results of the sampling program showed anomalous values of gold and silver mineralization.

Mining Claims within the WSA are summarized on Table 4, taken from BLM mineral records dated December 7, 1987. The claims are located in the northeast and west-central portion of the WSA.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	N/A	8	8	N/A	160	160
Placer	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	8	8	N/A	160	160

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Opportunities for wilderness values could suffer adverse impacts due to potential mineral exploration and development for uranium. Site-specific areas would be impacted due to extraction of cinders within the eastern portion of the WSA. This impact is considered to be minor since mitigation of impacts must follow strict regulations as found in the CDCA Plan. Continued off-highway vehicle use would reduce opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for exploration and development would continue to be available within the area. However, mining activities would be restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines outlined in the CDCA Plan which limits vehicle access and mitigate adverse effects on sensitive resource values.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation: Opportunities for motorized recreation on designated routes would continue to be available within the area.
4. Impact on Native American Values: Opportunities for vehicle dependent access by Native Americans would not be hindered by the recommendation.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1968. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Most of the comments referred to motorized recreational interest in the area. Others challenged the classification of the road along the southwestern boundary. Further field examination supported the findings.
2. Study Phase: Twenty-four of the thirty-one comments received on WSA 130 opposed wilderness designation. Eleven of these were identically marked Wilderness Forms from members of California Association of Four-Wheel Drive Clubs; they stated that roads, mine structures, and campsites interfered with the area's wilderness quality and that the past and potential use of the area by recreational vehicles was very high. The fact that the Interim Critical Management Plan designated the area as open was mentioned by several respondents. A frequently mentioned feature of the area was said to interfere with wilderness quality was the noise from overflights of jet aircraft from George Air Force Base and from the Naval Weapons Center. Other writers wanted to keep the area open for hunting and for geothermal resource development.

The study comments favoring wilderness designation addressed the need for protection of air quality, wildlife (black toad) and vegetation (the black toad does not inhabit the area). Values of primitive recreation opportunities were also mentioned.

Three letters were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). Two expressed support of wilderness preservation and designation. One addressed the need to consider the potential for geothermal energy development in this area.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation organizations and

their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for the area.

4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the proposed plan. Motorized vehicular organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Coso Range

CDCA 131

COSO RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-131)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

27,119 acres

The Coso Range WSA is located in Inyo County in the northwestern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest rural communities are Darwin, approximately 15 miles to the southeast and Olancho, approximately 15 miles to the west. The area is composed of 26,486 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and 633 acres of State land. No split estate or private lands are located within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

In a clock-wise manner, the northern boundary starts approximately one and one-half miles southeast of State Highway 190 on an unnamed dirt road. The eastern boundary follows the dirt road south for five miles. At this point, the boundary follows topographic contours on the eastern edge of Joshua Flat south for approximately eleven miles, until it meets the China Lake Naval Weapons Center's (NWC) northern boundary. The boundary follows the NWC boundary west for approximately three miles. The boundary then trends north along the base of Silver Mountain for one mile and then cuts cross country for five miles until it meets an unnamed dirt road. The boundary then follows the dirt road for two miles and cuts cross country for five miles until it meets the extreme northern portion of the boundary.

The WSA contains approximately 20% alluvial fans, 60% mountains and 20% flats. The topography consists of alluvial plains which extend northwest towards Owens Dry Lake from the Coso Mountain Range. The middle of the unit consists of the Coso Mountain Range which is a region displaying volcanic activities and erosional features. Some interior valleys and washes are also present. Joshua Flat, which is an interior valley, forms the southern portion of the WSA. Elevations range from 4,000 feet in the northwest portion of the area to approximately 7,200 feet at the top of the Coso Mountain Range. Rounded peaks form high points in the middle of that range.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Various suitability recommendations were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for the CDCA Plan and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS. Only the no-wilderness recommendation was analyzed for the WSA in the EIS. The all-wilderness option was eliminated from further consideration during the scoping process for the CDCA Plan.

2. <u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> ---	0	acres recommended for wilderness
	26,486	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

While the WSA did meet the general criteria of wilderness as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, further studies during the preparation of the CDCA Plan determined that the area's values as wilderness were minimal and were exceeded by other resource values. The Coso Range WSA is not recommended to become part of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) for the following reasons: (1) marginal wilderness values; (2) motorized recreation use; and (3) mineral potential.

Naturalness has been adversely impacted by vehicle routes within the WSA. Solitude is available within the area, but it is not considered to be outstanding. Nondescript topography and an absence of vegetative screening in a large, flat and unattractive area called Joshua Flat also detracts from the solitude of the area.

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation exist within the area, but are not outstanding due to the nondescript land forms. Joshua Flat, in the southern half of the area, is flat and unappealing to the wilderness traveler. Backpacking and hiking within the area has never been a significant activity.

There are approximately 11 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. Traditional uses within the area are dependent upon motorized vehicles for access. Uses include rockhounding, quail and chukar hunting, and use by grazing permittees and mineral exploration personnel. The area is within five miles of an off-highway vehicle (OHV) open area. Vehicle use from this open area affects roads which border and enter the WSA.

Mineral potential exists within the area which outweighs the value of the area for wilderness. A moderate mineral potential exists for uranium in the northwestern one-third of the area. The southwestern portion of the area has moderate potential for rare earths (cerium). The northeastern portion of the area has a moderate potential for clay resources. Within the WSA, there were 265 unpatented mining claims as of December, 1987. Many of these claims are thought to be able to withstand a validity examination. Development of such claims will seriously impact wilderness values throughout the area (Map 2).

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

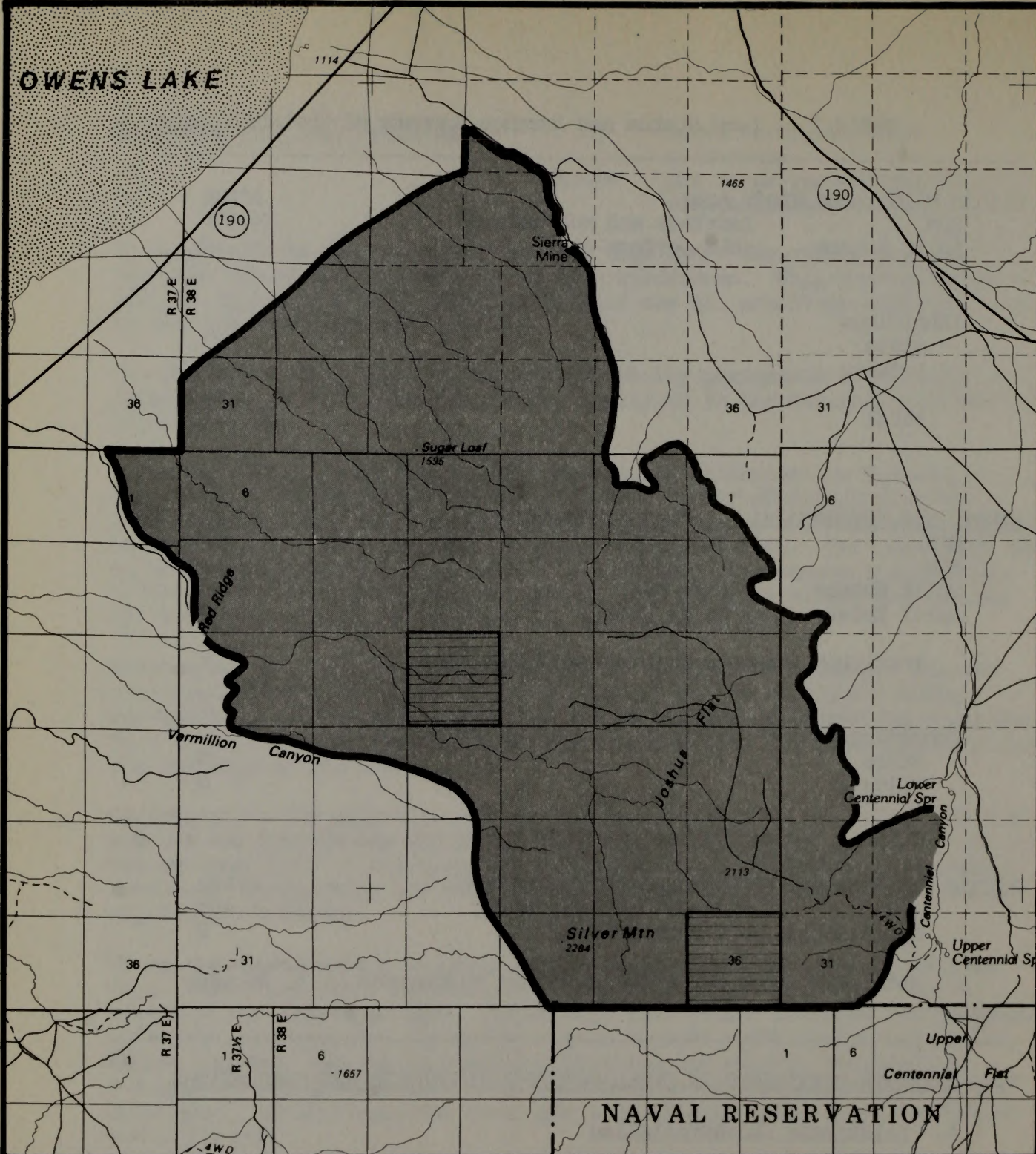
<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	26,486
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		633
Private		0
Total		<u>27,119</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	26,486
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>26,486</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The majority of the area has been affected primarily by natural forces. A series of vehicle routes impact the naturalness of the area in the southern one-half of the WSA. The routes are used to gain access to the Joshua Flat area which is used as a grazing area and a mining prospecting area. The northern portion of the area has a route system which cuts into the WSA for four miles ending at mining adits and prospecting areas.

OWENS LAKE



T 18S

T 19S

T 19S

T 20S

R 37E

R 37 1/2E

R 38E

R 38E

R 39E

NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

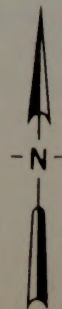
RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE



Coso Range
Proposal
MAP-1

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-131
JUNE, 1988

2. Solitude: Solitude can be found within the WSA although it cannot be considered outstanding. The low rolling mountains of the northern portion of the Coso Mountain Range afford some solitude but it is minimal. The Joshua Flat area, which makes up about one-half of the WSA, offers some solitude, but due to its flat topography and lack of vegetative screening, solitude can only be considered average.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities exist for primitive and unconfined recreation, but it cannot be considered outstanding. The alluvial fans within the northern portion of the area have potential for primitive recreation. The middle of the WSA is composed of the Coso Mountain range which is a low range of mountains which offers potential for primitive and unconfined recreation. The southern portion of the area in Joshua Flats has potential for primitive and unconfined recreation but is a flat unattractive area where recreationists seldom visit.
4. Special Features: Four areas of cultural sensitivity occur in the WSA. Identified resources include prehistoric campsites and activity areas from different periods of time. The area was used historically by Owens Valley Shoshone, Owens Valley Paiute, and the Panamint Shoshone Indians for hunting and collecting food plants and materials.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System
(NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 26,486 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. The Coso Range WSA would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS. This ecosystem is well represented in other WSAs in the CDCA recommended for wilderness designation.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification <u>Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,241,243
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,627,619

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of six major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 14 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Golden Trout, managed by the Forest Service, ten miles to the west.

C. Manageability

The Coso Range WSA is manageable as wilderness; however, vehicle use is extensive in the area. Primary users are employees of mineral exploration firms and grazing permittees. If designated wilderness, this traditional vehicle use could create management problems. Mineral

potential within the area could also result in manageability problems. The northwestern one-third of the area has a moderate potential for uranium. The southwestern portion of the area has a moderate potential for rare earths (cerium) and the northeastern portion of the area has a moderate potential for clay resources. Due to future mineral needs, the above minerals could be in more demand in the future. As of December, 1987 there were 265 unpatented mining claims located within the WSA. Development of any valid existing rights would seriously degrade wilderness values throughout large portions of the WSA.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Coso Range WSA is located in the BLM Haiwee Reservoir Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III, 1980) was incomplete and had not been fully analyzed, integrated, and interpreted at the time of the preliminary suitability recommendation. However, the EIS G-E-M narrative of 1980 stated that the WSA has potential for the occurrence of uranium, metals, montmorillonite, perlite, pumice, and cinders. The northwest portion of the WSA lays within a large block of 2,309 unpatented claims located for uranium and filed with the BLM as of December 12, 1979.

A BLM GRA report was not produced from the file data and the WSA was not classified for the potential occurrence of mineral resources. However, the 1980 BLM GRA file contains data that documents a significant geochemical anomaly for uranium in sedimentary rocks outcropping in the northwestern one-third of the WSA. Also included in the BLM GRA file is a documented significant (samples equal to or greater than one standard deviation above normal) rare earth (cerium) anomaly in the granitic rocks outcropping in the southwestern one-third of the WSA. In addition, the BLM GRA file data included an estimate of \$92,000,000 (1979 dollars) for clay deposits (montmorillonite) located in the vicinity of the Sierra Talc Mine in the northeastern portion of the WSA.

According to Stinson, (1977, Geologic map and sections of the Keeler 15 minute quadrangle, Inyo County, California, California Division of Mines and Geology, Map Sheet 38) the northwestern one-third of the WSA is underlain by sandstones, siltstones and clays of the Coso Formation. Stinson also states that uranium mineralization is locally present and associated with the rocks of the Coso Formation. Based on the favorable geology and the significant geochemical anomaly as documented in the 1980 BLM GRA data and the number of mining claims filed for uranium in this area, the

northwestern one-third of the WSA can be classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium according to the BLM classification as shown on Map 2.

Jolly, in (1975, Mineral Facts and Problems, Bureau of Mines, Bulletin 667, page 894) states that the lanthanons (rare earth minerals), of which cerium is one of the more common, occur most often in granitic rocks. According to Stinson (1977), the central and southwestern portions of the WSA are underlain by granitic rocks. Based on the favorable geology and the geochemical anomaly as documented in the 1980 BLM GRA file, the southwestern portion of the WSA can be classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of rare earth (cerium) mineralization.

The 1980 BLM GRA report assigned an estimated value to montmorillonite clay deposits located in the northeast portion of the WSA near the Sierra Talc Mine. Norman and Stewart, in Mines and Mineral Resources of Inyo County, California (1951, California Jour. Mines and Geology, v. 47, p. 98-99) describe the Calearth Clay Deposit located one-half mile to the east of the Sierra Talc Mine. The geology, as described by Norman and Stewart, occurs in the northeast portion of the WSA (Stinson, 1977 CDMG Map Sheet 38). Based on the favorable geology and the close vicinity of a known producing clay deposit, the northeastern portion of the WSA can be classified under the BLM classification system as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of clay.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys have been conducted in the WSA because it is recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation.

In 1983 and 1984, BLM accepted and approved two plans of operation for exploration drilling on the Coso prospect. The Coso prospect consists of 180 unpatented mining claims located primarily within the WSA, but extending into non-WSA land to the northeast. The drilling program proposed the drilling of ten exploration holes in the search of precious metal mineralization. Results of the drilling program have not been made public. Mining Claims in the WSA are summarized on Table 4, taken from BLM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	N/A	264	264	N/A	5,280	5,280
Placer	N/A	1	1	N/A	40	40
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	265	265	N/A	5,320	5,320

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values could suffer adverse impacts due to potential mineral exploration and development within specific areas within the WSA as described in this document. Continued use of the area by motorized vehicles could also have moderate adverse impacts on wilderness values.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for exploration and development would continue to be available within the area. Exploration and development would be subject to regulations stated in 43 CFR 3809 regarding surface disturbance, as well as any additional constraints stated in the CDCA Plan.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation: Opportunities for motorized recreation on designated routes would continue to be available within the area.
4. Impact on Native American Values: Native American Values would not be affected by nondesignation. Native Americans would be able to drive into the area on designated routes to collect native plant fibers.
5. Impact on Livestock Grazing: Forage allocations for livestock would be able to increase under normal administrative constraints.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: A large number of comments were received indicating interest in motorized vehicle recreation. Other comments argued the presence or absence of natural conditions in those portions of the roadless area not identified as possessing wilderness characteristics, but no further changes in the findings were appropriate.
2. Study Phase: Of the 45 study comments received on this WSA, 21 favored wilderness designation. Features which were said to enhance wilderness suitability included Joshua Flat, wildlife (Inyo mule

deer, black toad, desert bighorn, and golden eagle), vegetation (rich variety of wild flowers, cholla, white cedars, pinyon-juniper-Joshua tree woodland), archaeology (petroglyphs, pictographs, Indian artifacts), the Coso volcanic field, and an area rich in paleontological values. Some respondents felt that contiguity to the Naval Weapons Center would facilitate wilderness management and, possibly, allow extension of the Center's ecological program into WSA #131.

Several respondents said that although the area had been open to OHV activity, damage was minimal and did not detract from wilderness suitability. Others wanted to add McCloud Flat and Lower Centennial Flat back to the WSA and to also add Black Rock Canyon.

Most of the people opposing wilderness preferred OHV recreational use for this area. Ten of the communications were Wilderness Evaluation Forms from members of the California Association of Four-Wheel Drive Clubs. They cited the past open designation under the Interim Critical Management Plan and the variety of applicable uses, which included rockhounding, camping, hunting, dune running, four-wheeling, motorcycling, prospecting, trail riding, nature study, and photography. Other respondents stressed the mineralization of the area and the desire to continue mineral exploration and development. They also felt that existing and past mining structures and roads detracted from wilderness suitability.

Many respondents mentioned the noise of overflights of jets from nearby military bases which they felt detracted from an atmosphere of solitude. The California State Lands Commission protested inclusion of WSA 131 among the WSAs meeting Sec 2(c) wilderness criteria. The Commission thought this might have an adverse effect on the State's management of one of its holdings for uranium prospecting.

Five letters were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). One favored wilderness designation, while the others were from mining and energy companies who opposed wilderness due to its potential effects on exploration and development of minerals and geothermal energy. Two mining companies particularly wanted to delete the northwestern portion of the WSA because of their mineral interests. One individual insisted that the WSA did not meet wilderness criteria because of man's imprints, especially in the area near the Naval Weapons Center.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons and letters supporting this position. Conservation

organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for this area.

4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Great Falls Basin

CDCA 132

GREAT FALLS BASIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-132)

1. THE STUDY AREA

6,502 acres

The Great Falls Basin WSA is located in Inyo County within the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The community of Trona is four miles to the south. The WSA includes 6,039 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and 463 acres of private land (see Map 1 and Table 1).

Section lines virtually form the entire WSA boundary. The northern boundary crosses mountainous terrain on the south side of Homewood Canyon. The eastern boundary is located near the edges of the mountains and the alluvial fan. The southern boundary is along the north side of Wilson Canyon within the steep portion of the Argus Mountain Range. The China Lake Naval Weapons Center forms the western boundary which is near the crest of the Argus Mountains.

The physical geography of the WSA is very steep with jagged ridges, sharp peaks, and deep, steep-faced canyons which drain to the east. Heavy erosional and uplifting forces have caused the Great Falls Basin area to have a quality of ruggedness. The mountain elevations within this WSA range from 2,000 feet to 4,500 feet. The mountain range appears striated because of ancient sedimentation and has a variety of colors, ranging from reds to browns and oranges to golds. Vegetation is mixed desert scrub, with the dominant plant being creosote. In the higher elevations, the vegetation changes to heavier upland scrub with yucca, mountain mahogany, and some pinyon and juniper trees.

Virtually the entire WSA is contained within the Great Falls Basin Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan, protection, use, balanced, and no action, and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0 acres recommended for wilderness

6,039 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Great Falls Basin WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. Future activities in the area will be controlled by low intensity management as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

Marginal opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation, identified energy and mineral potentials, and manageability issues are the major rationale for the decision to recommend this area as nonsuitable for wilderness. The existing ACEC Management Plan directs use and management of sensitive wildlife values in the area. Designation of the area as wilderness would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Other WSAs in the California Desert that are recommended suitable offer a much more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values.

Wilderness values are present in the WSA, although they cannot be considered outstanding. This WSA provides minimal opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The large block of private land prevents access into and across the entire southern portion of the area. The western boundary of the WSA is totally closed to the public because it is the border of the Naval Weapons Center.

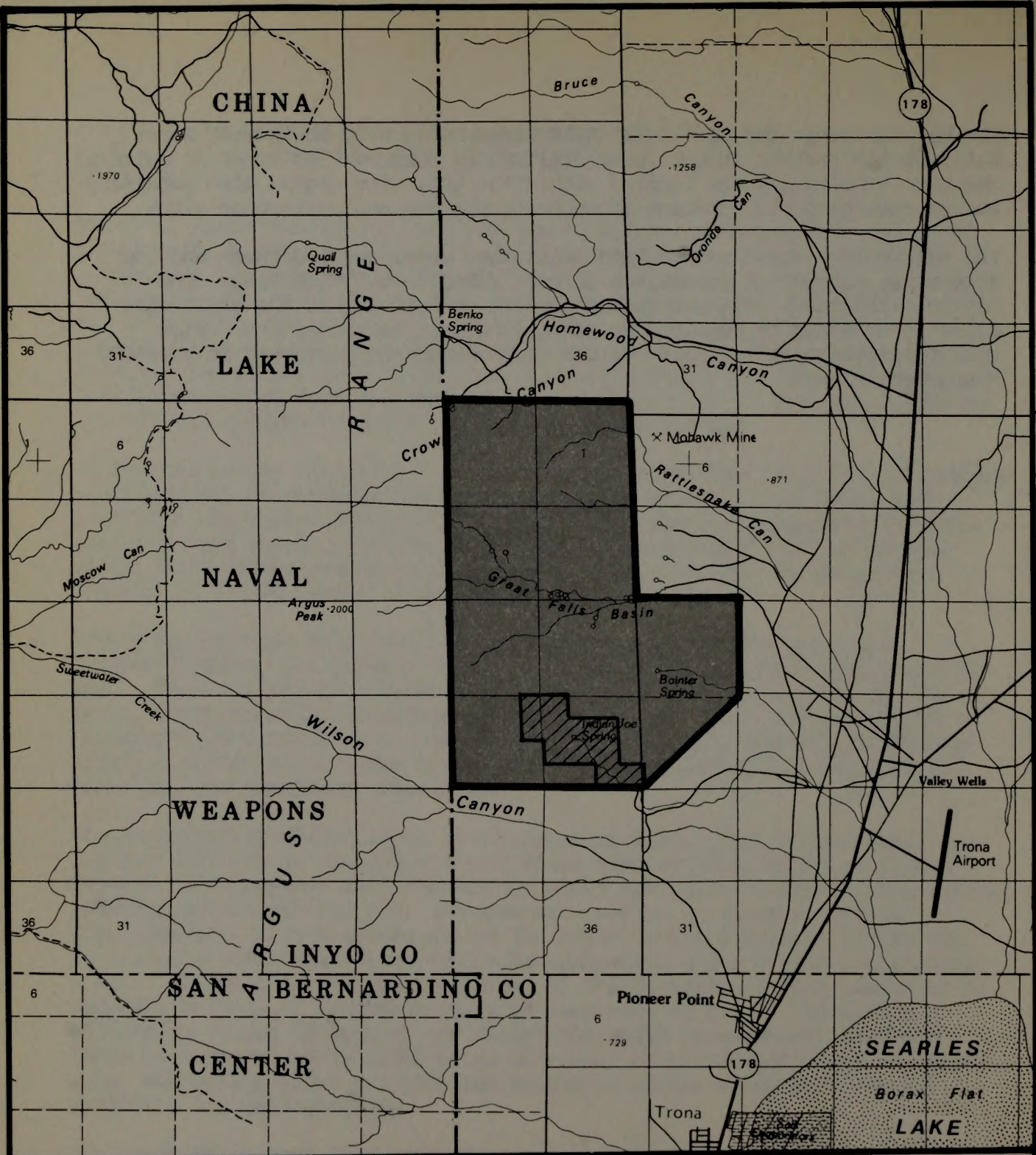
The Argus Mountain Range has long been recognized for its known and potential energy and mineral values. Mining claims encumber over 5% of the WSA. These claims are located primarily in the northern part of the WSA where there are high potentials for gold, lead and tin. The likelihood of an economical discovery is considered good. Virtually the entire WSA has moderate potential for rare earths and the eastern extension has moderate potential for geothermal resources.

The WSA would be difficult to manage as wilderness. The area is small and narrow, only two to two and one-half miles wide and four miles in length. Private land intrudes into the WSA for about one mile and affects the entire southern portion of the WSA. An extensive series of water diversion pipelines are located within all of the major drainage systems in the WSA. This entire water collection system is authorized under a 1902 right-of-way grant. Although not currently in use, if the diversion system needed to be updated, mechanical equipment would be necessary to repair the system. Wilderness values throughout the entire WSA would be adversely impacted. There are approximately eight miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

The Great Falls area does contain recognized riparian and wildlife values. Virtually the entire WSA is within the Great Falls Basin ACEC designated in the California Desert Conservation Area Plan. The area was set aside as an ACEC for the Inyo brown towhee, a State-listed rare bird species, and for natural and scenic values. Numerous springs within the canyons of the WSA are important habitat for the Inyo brown towhee. The area has provided habitat for desert bighorn sheep in the past and could provide habitat for reintroduction of this species in the future.

The WSA is within the Centennial Wild Horse/Burro Herd Management Area. Water within the WSA is currently utilized by burros. Two areas of cultural resource sensitivity are located within the WSA. The region also generally encompasses historic Panamint-Shoshone occupation and collection sites.

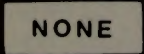
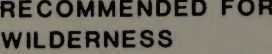

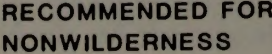
The WSA would be best managed and maintained under nonwilderness and low intensity, management guidelines as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. The minimal wilderness values that are present do not warrant the additional effort that would be required to manage the area as wilderness. High quality riparian and wildlife values are managed and protected in the ACEC Management Plan.

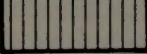
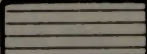



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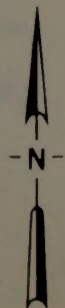
R42E R43E

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|---|-------------------------------|---|---|
|  | NONE |  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
|  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | STATE |
|  | PRIVATE |

Great Falls Basin
Proposal
MAP-1

0 1 2 3
MILES



CDCA-132
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	6,039
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		463
Total		<u>6,502</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	6,039
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>6,039</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The WSA retains most of its primeval character. However, historically the area was used as a water gathering system to provide water for mineral production at the Trona Minerals Company. Although much of the system has fallen into disrepair, a right-of-way is still in effect on the diversion systems. The water was piped from springs within the WSA and gravity fed to collecting tanks outside of the WSA. The system traverses through six sections (3,840 acres) of the WSA and impacts every major drainage. The above water systems are noticeable within the drainages.

2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude can be obtained within the canyons of the WSA. However, the WSA is only two to two and one-half miles wide and four miles long and the opportunities cannot be considered outstanding. The water collection system and the rank smell of nearby manufacturing facilities in Trona are a constant reminder of man's presence in the area.

This WSA is periodically overflown by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities for unrestricted movement are somewhat limited throughout the entire WSA. The configuration of the WSA, as well as the extensive water collection system, have a restrictive affect. Movement is also restricted on the western boundary of the WSA due to the Naval Weapons Center boundary which is totally closed to entry. An area of 440 acres of "posted" private land lies within the boundary in the southern end of the WSA. The private land blocks unrestricted movement within the entire southern portion of the area and lessens the opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.
4. Special Features: The flora and fauna in the area is somewhat unusual. Virtually the entire WSA is within the Great Falls Basin ACEC. The ACEC area is set aside for scenic values and protection of habitat for the Inyo brown towhee, a State-listed rare bird species. The area also has had historic use by desert bighorn sheep, although no sheep have been reported within the area for many years. Seeps and springs, with associated riparian habitat, are located throughout the WSA in the canyon areas.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 6,039 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. The Great Falls Basin WSA would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS. This ecosystem is represented by many other WSAs in the CDCA that are recommended suitable for wilderness designation.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification <u>Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BIM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,261,870
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,648,066

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of nine major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and BIM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers California</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BIM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Fresno	35	4,048,852	28	460,790
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
Santa Barbara-Santa Maria- Lompoc	20	1,166,142	35	528,590
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 14 BIM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Domeland Wilderness, administered by Sequoia National Forest, 40 miles west of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Great Falls Basin WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, several significant issues have a high potential to complicate manageability of the area for wilderness.

The north, east, and southern boundaries follow no identifiable features, cutting across ridges and canyons. Demarkation and enforcement of such boundaries will require special attention.

Management of the entire southern portion of the WSA is compromised by a block of private land extending the length of Indian Joe Canyon. Development of this land for residential or industrial purposes would be incompatible with wilderness management. The private land also effectively breaks up the southern portion of the WSA into isolated compartments.

Spread throughout the entire WSA are a series of water pipelines in the major canyons. The pipelines have a right-of-way which dates back to 1902. Although they are currently non-operational, revitalization of the water collection system for the industrial needs of nearby Trona is possible. The resultant impacts of making the system operational would seriously threaten the ability to manage the already minimal quality wilderness values that are present.

The Argus Range has long been known for its mineral and energy values. The northern portion of the WSA has high potential for gold, lead and tin. Virtually the entire WSA has moderate potential for rare earths and the eastern portion has moderate potential for geothermal resources. The WSA, to the north and east, is rimmed with historic mines and evidences of mineral exploration. The 14 mining claims that encumber 300 acres of the WSA are primarily located at the north end of the WSA. Given the past history of the surrounding area, the likelihood for mineral development on valid existing mineral rights is considered very high.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Great Basin WSA is located in the BLM Searles Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the CDCA plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 stated that the WSA has potential for rare earths, tin, manganese, beryllium, and zirconium. As of December 12, 1979, no mining claims were recorded with the BLM in the WSA.

The 1980 BLM GRA report and file data support the CDCA plan EIS statement. The 1980 BLM GRA file documents geochemical data that shows a significant anomaly for rare earth mineralization throughout the entire WSA. Based on the geochemical evidence of anomalously high values for niobium and cerium, and significantly high values of lanthanum, and ytterbium, and a favorable geologic environment, the GRA report classified ninety percent of the WSA as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of rare earth mineralization (see accompanying mineral potential map). The northern one-third of the WSA is included in the Argus (formerly Sherman) Gold District. Nearby mines in the District, the Mohawk and Ruth, have produced in excess of 26,000 ounces of gold (1980 BLM GRA report). In addition, geochemical data documented in the 1980 BLM GRA file shows an anomaly for lead and tin in this area. Based on the geochemical evidence, and the presence of nearby gold mines which have produced gold in the past, the northern one-third of the WSA was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a high potential for the occurrence of gold, lead and tin. The GRA did not classify the WSA for manganese, beryllium or zirconium.

The eastern portion of the WSA was classified by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS, Conservation Division, 1979) as a Potential Geothermal Resource Area (PGRA). Based on this classification, the 1980 BLM GRA report stated that this area had a moderate potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources.

The entire WSA was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a low potential for the occurrence of saleable minerals (sand, gravel, crushed rock) based on the existence of favorable rock types. The GRA file data indicated that the while favorable rock types may exist, the remoteness of the WSA and high transportation costs to markets preclude the development of these deposits in the near future.

The 1980 BLM GRA report did not classify the WSA for the occurrence of uranium, sodium, potassium, and industrial minerals (limestone, barite, etc.) due to lack of sufficient data. However, the GRA report stated that favorable rock types often associated with uranium occurrences may be present.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral survey was completed for this WSA because it is recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation.

The nearby Kerr-McGee soda ash and calcium chloride facilities at Searles Lake continue to be upgraded and expanded. Nearly-final plans call for the construction of a large, electrical cogeneration plant capable of supplying Kerr-McGee power needs. The construction of this facility will require a significant amount of construction material (e.g., sand and gravel) which may be supplied by deposits

located in this WSA. However, absent current interest, the sand and gravel resources of the WSA are considered, at this time, as having a low potential for occurrence based on the BLM mineral classification system.

While little mineral occurrence data have been developed since 1980, the importance of the rare earth minerals has been recognized as critical to the development of new high-tech industries. Nearly 100% of all domestic rare earth minerals are currently produced from MolyCorp's mine at Mountain Pass, California.

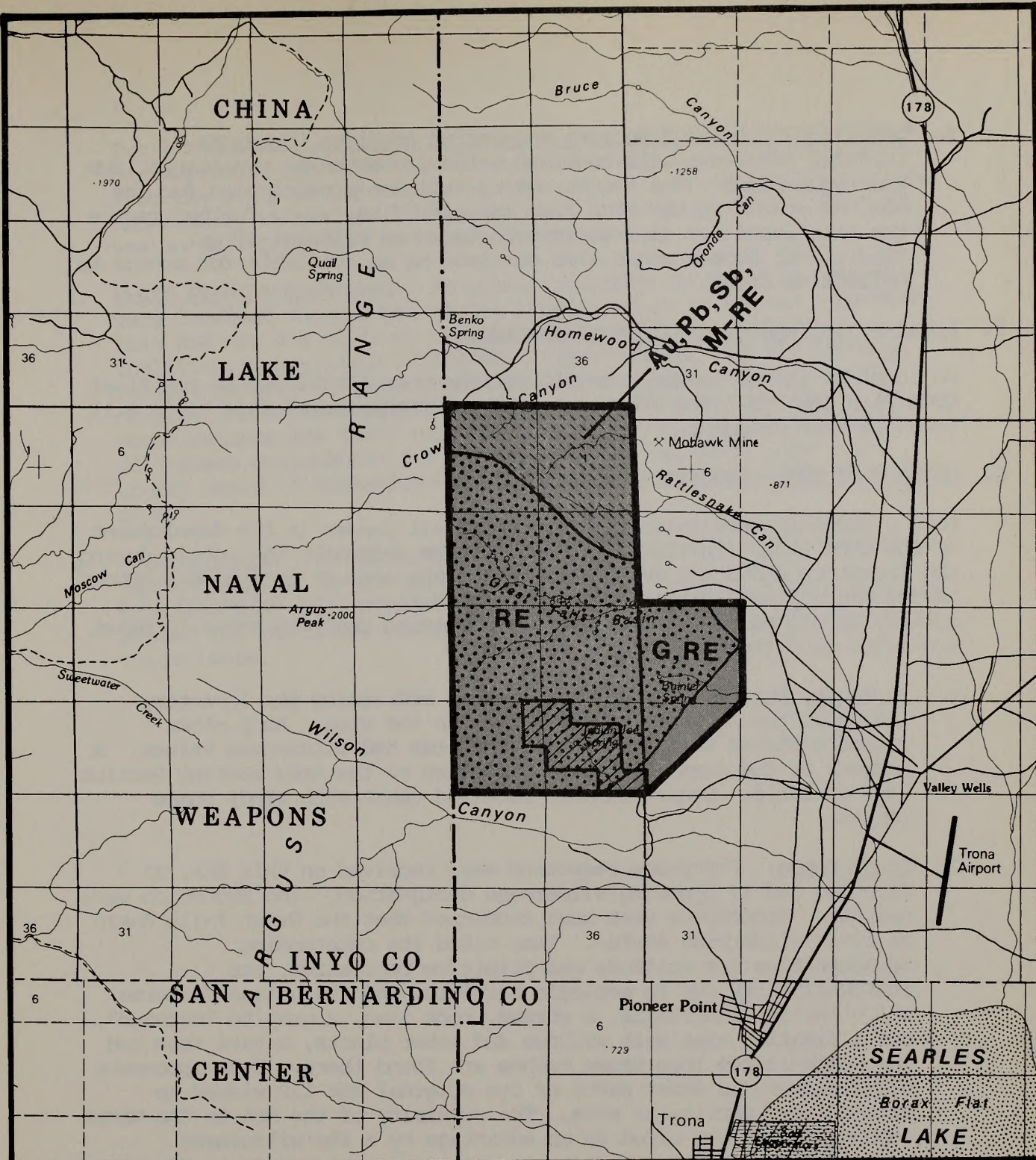
Unpatented mining claims in the area are located in the north-central portion of the WSA within the area classified as having a high occurrence potential for gold, lead and tin by the 1980 BLM GRA report. Mining Claims in the WSA are shown on Table 4 from BLM records dated January, 1988.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	13	13	N/A	260	260
Placer	N/A	1	1	N/A	40	40
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	14	14	N/A	300	300

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

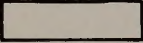


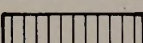
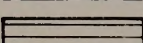
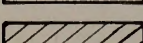
1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Noise, surface disturbance and access requirements for potential mineral and energy exploration and development could negatively impact naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. However, according to the low intensity, management guidelines prescribed for the area in the CDCA Plan and the Great Falls Basin ACEC Plan, strict mitigating measures would be applied to all actions that have the potential to adversely affect sensitive resource values.
2. Impact on Minerals and Energy: Opportunities for exploration and development of minerals and energy would continue to be available subject to applicable laws, regulations and the low intensity, multiple use, management guidelines established in the CDCA Plan and the Great Falls Basin ACEC Plan.
3. Impact on ACEC and Wildlife Habitat: Opportunities for implementation of a complete spectrum of management actions would continue to be available to protect and enhance riparian and wildlife habitats. Potential development of mining operations are expected to result in site-specific impacts.
4. Impact on Wild Burro Management: Mechanized equipment could be available for use in managing populations to meet goals established in the CDCA Plan.





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R42E R43E

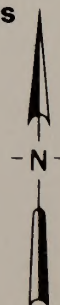
-  Recommended for Wilderness
-  Recommended for Non Wilderness
-  Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
-  Split Estate
-  State
-  Private

Explanation

-  High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
-  Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- Au** Gold
- G** Geothermal
- Pb** Lead
- RE** Rare Earths
- Sb** Antimony



**Great Falls Basin
Mineral Resource Potential**

0 1 2 3
MILES

**MAP-2
CDCA-132**

5. Impact on Cultural Resources and Native American Concerns:

Cultural resources will continue to be protected by applicable laws and regulations. The low intensity land use prescription for the WSA, as stated in the CDCA Plan and ACEC Plan, would further reduce the likelihood for adverse impacts to known cultural sites. Traditional access would also continue to be available for access to collection areas.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Many of the comments addressing the inventory indicated the presence of man's work in the area. Many other comments stated that portions of the area had wilderness values. A recheck of the area identified a portion of the area meeting Section 2(c) criteria. Other comments received dealt with study phase issues.
2. Study Phase: Forty-one responses were received on this WSA, 22 favoring and 17 opposing wilderness designation, and two which were neutral. Proponents were most concerned that the Great Falls Basin be given Wilderness status. They cited its outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, its inaccessibility due to geologic barriers, and its unique features which include waterfalls, a stream, rock jams, a granite "bathtub", and a riparian area with willows and water plants, a rare fern and the State-listed Inyo brown towhee are found there. Even opponents of wilderness in other parts of the original WSA 132 wished to protect this particular area. The proximity of the WSA to the Naval Weapons Center was cited as an advantage by a few wilderness proponents.

Wilderness opponents listed many roads and mining structures and activities which they believed were inconsistent with wilderness. A field recheck led to the deletion of several portions of the original WSA. Some respondents expressed the desire to continue hunting and motorized vehicle use in the area. The impression was expressed that the government has already taken over too much of the land and that this area should be left open for mining and recreational use.

Two letters were received in response to the Public Input Workbook. One expressed approval of wilderness for this area. The other was from the owner of land in Indian Joe Canyon. He stated that it was unnecessary to declare the Great Falls Basin Wilderness, since it was so well protected by natural barriers.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rock-hounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons and letters supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for this area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Darwin Falls

CDCA 132A

DARWIN FALLS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-132A)

1. THE STUDY AREA —

7,438 acres

The Darwin Falls WSA is located in Inyo County in the northern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest communities are Lone Pine, 25 miles west; Trona, 40 miles southeast; and Ridgecrest, 52 miles south. The WSA includes 7,438 acres of public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). There are no State lands nor are there any private inholdings. No split-estate lands exist within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern boundary of the WSA is State Highway 190. The eastern boundary follows the Darwin Canyon wash bottom. The southern border follows a maintained county dirt road from Darwin Canyon and continues west for approximately two miles where it leaves the road and follows the foothills of the Argus Range excluding China Garden Spring. The remainder of the southern boundary follows two unnamed washes west for six miles until it intersects with State Highway 190.

The study area includes the extreme southern end of the Darwin Plateau, several deep canyons associated with it and the foothills of the Argus Range. The Darwin Plateau, which lies at the 4,000-foot elevation, is cut by several shallow depressions and canyons. Elevations range from 2,270 feet on the east side of the area to 5,400 feet on the west side of the study area. The WSA contains 50% plateaus, 40% mountains and 10% alluvial fans.

Within the study area, vegetation consists primarily of creosote bush scrub. A small riparian zone with a variety of mosses and ferns exists in the southwestern tip of the study area. This area includes approximately 1,000 acres of the larger Darwin Falls Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) which extends beyond the WSA boundaries. Additionally, 180 acres surrounding Darwin Falls have been withdrawn from mineral entry for the protection of wildlife and scenic values. No BLM sensitive plant or wildlife species and no Federal or State listed rare, threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species are known to exist within this WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE —

0	acres recommended for wilderness
7,438	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally-preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The nonsuitable recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the landforms and ecosystems of the Darwin Falls WSA are represented in other areas recommended for wilderness designation; (2) deposits of salable minerals such as sand and gravel are abundant within the WSA, and (3) the WSA shows a moderate to high occurrence potential for a variety of other minerals. There are no known primitive routes within the WSA.

The addition of the Darwin Falls WSA to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) would not add to the diversity or uniqueness of the system, nor would it add significantly to the wilderness recreational opportunities available in the region. These factors, combined with the fact that the overall WSA has only marginal wilderness values, led to the nonwilderness recommendation.

The landform and ecosystem exhibited by the study area are already well represented in other areas identified for wilderness preservation. Within 50 air miles are eight CDCA WSA's recommended for wilderness designation along with two designated wilderness areas administered by the Sequoia National Forest. All are mountainous, and all contain a more diversified representation of the same type of ecosystem found within the Darwin Falls WSA.

The naturalness and opportunities for solitude within this WSA only minimally meet the criteria defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. Because the study area is narrow, and exists as an isolated ridge of public land lying adjacent to a state highway, China Lake Naval Weapons Center and extensive mining activities, it is difficult to escape the sights and sounds of civilization. These outside sights and sounds include vehicle traffic and multiple daily low-level military overflights, all of which seriously detract from the sense of solitude and remoteness to be experienced within the area.

The WSA has a high occurrence potential for copper, lead, silver and zinc. The western one-third of the WSA also shows a significant anomaly for chromium and cobalt. Additionally, two areas show a high potential for the occurrence of sand and gravel. Extraction of sand and gravel is critical for the resurfacing of State Highway 190, which forms the northern WSA boundary. Portions of the WSA have been utilized for extraction of these materials.

Existing reserves are being depleted and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is actively searching for quality material sites that are within an economical hauling distance from the highway. Wilderness designation would conflict with full development of these potential resources, since the area would be withdrawn from mineral entry and leasing.

Protection of wilderness values and other resource values is being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the Darwin Falls ACEC Management Plan completed in 1988. These actions include protection of wildlife and scenic quality and involve potential closure of additional routes of travel and enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas. Approximately 180 acres surrounding the falls and riparian area are formally withdrawn from mineral entry and the main vehicle access route into Darwin Falls is closed to motorized vehicles. Wilderness designation would not provide any additional protection to this portion of the WSA.

The resource values in the WSA would be best managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's limited and moderate use guidelines coupled with the existing withdrawal, vehicle closed area, and restrictions outlined in the ACEC management plan serve to lessen potential impacts to resources within the WSA.



T 17 S

T 18 S

T 18 S

T 19 S

R 40 E

R 41 E

R 41 E

R 42 E

NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

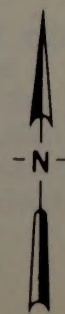
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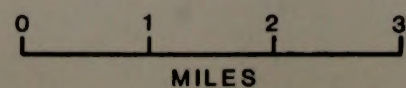
SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE



**Darwin Falls
Proposal
MAP-1**



CDCA-132A
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	7,438
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
Total		<hr/> 7,438

<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<hr/> 0

Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0

<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	7,438
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		<hr/> 7,438

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area has been affected primarily by natural forces. Man's imprint is substantially unnoticeable throughout the majority of the area. A small pond to impound water along with a five-inch diameter above-ground pipeline has been installed below Darwin Falls. The pipeline, which collects water from the stream, traverses the southwestern portion of the WSA for one-half mile providing water for Panamint Springs, a small resort community three

miles east of the WSA. This pipeline is an authorized right-of-way. Vehicle ways and assessment pits associated with mining occur along the entire north border and in most of the western part of the study area.

2. Solitude: The deep canyons which penetrate the center of the WSA provide isolation from other visitors. Although these opportunities may be found, they are somewhat limited due to the outside sights and sounds.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The rugged canyon bottoms of Darwin Canyon along with the riparian area associated with Darwin Falls, provide excellent opportunities primitive recreation in these rugged and undeveloped areas.
4. Special Features: The feature of major significance in the study area is Darwin Falls located in the southeast portion of the WSA. This small area contains riparian vegetation, a perennial stream which flows for one mile through Darwin Canyon, shaded pools, three small waterfalls, precipitous canyon walls, and several wildlife species including raptors, migratory birds, small rodents and toads. Approximately 1,000 acres of the WSA are included in the larger 3,100-acre Darwin Falls ACEC which extends south of the WSA boundary. Within the study area, 180 acres surrounding the falls have been formally withdrawn from mineral entry. To further protect the area, the route from Darwin Canyon leading to the falls has been closed to motorized vehicle access.

The WSA includes prehistoric Native American sites and historic sites associated with mining. The Native American Panamint Shoshone and Lone Pine Shoshone Indians inhabited the area in prehistoric/historic times. Darwin Spring continues to hold religious significance for Native American people in the region.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 7,438 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. Although Darwin Falls as a single feature in the WSA is somewhat unique, designation of the study area as a whole would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the NWPS. This ecosystem is represented in many of the 44 recommended suitable areas within the California Desert.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

<u>Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BIM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,260,471
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,646,667

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BIM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BIM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of eight BIM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is the South Sierra Wilderness Area, managed by the Forest Service, 50 air miles west.

C. Manageability

The Darwin Falls WSA is manageable as wilderness.

However, development of any valid mining claims in the WSA would create manageability problems through mining scars, noise and dust which would adversely impact wilderness values.

Management of the study area, because of the openness of the terrain within the western portion of the WSA would require an intensive signing program coupled with a diligent patrol effort would be needed to enforce the wilderness area closure to motorized vehicles in this area.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Darwin Falls WSA is located in the BLM Darwin/Slate Range Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M narrative in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III, 1980) stated that the WSA had no known metallic mineral occurrences, however, the WSA contained a sand and gravel site with continuing use by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and has favorable rock types for metallic mineral occurrence.

The BLM GRA report and file data in 1980 support the G-E-M narrative of the EIS statement. The Darwin Falls WSA is north of, and adjacent to, the Darwin lead-silver mining district. Through 1952, the district has produced 5,913 ounces of gold, 7,630,492 ounces of silver, 1,489,396 pounds of copper, 117,566,900 pounds of lead, 52,124,947 pounds of zinc and 35,000 short ton units (20 pounds per stu) of tungsten concentrate. Operations at the Darwin Mine during the period from 1971 to 1972 produced 1,728,000 pounds of lead, 129,600 pounds of zinc, and 309 ounces of silver (1980 BLM GRA report). The 1980 BLM GRA report classified the extreme southern portion of the WSA as having a high occurrence potential for copper, lead, silver and zinc as shown on the accompanying map. An isolated area in the north-central portion of the WSA was also classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a low potential for the occurrence of copper, lead, silver and zinc based on a very favorable geologic setting. In addition, the 1980 BLM GRA file documented geochemical data that indicated the presence of a significant (two standard deviations above mean) anomaly for chromium and cobalt in the western one-third of the WSA.

The 1980 BLM GRA report also classified two areas (see map) as having a high potential for the occurrence of sand and gravel resources. At the time of the GRA study (1979), the northern area

was an active extraction site, and Caltrans was utilizing the material for the upkeep and maintenance of State Route 190. The eastern area was the site of a previous sand and gravel sale permitted by the BLM.

Data from the 1980 BLM GRA file was incomplete and did not assess the mineral potential classification for leasable minerals (geothermal, sodium, potassium, oil and gas).

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys were conducted for the Darwin Falls WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The WSA has not been classified prospectively valuable for geothermal resources by BLM (1982). However, a map by Majmundar (1983, Technical map of the geothermal resources of California, California Division of Mines and Geology, scale 1:750,000) shows the WSA to be in the middle of a large area with high and moderate geothermal occurrence potential. Based on the BLM classification system, the WSA is classified as having an unknown to low potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources.

Mining Claims in the WSA in BLM records dated January, 1988 are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	7	7	N/A	140	140
Placer	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	7	7	N/A	140	140

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Under low and moderate intensity management there would be no immediate impact. Over the long term, existing naturalness and solitude could gradually decline with projected gradually increasing off-highway vehicle (OHV) use of the area. Noise and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development will result in a gradual decline in these values in site specific areas (15% of the WSA). This adverse impact is considered minor since OHV use, exploration and development would be constrained by existing management guidelines.
2. Impact on Sensitive Riparian Habitats: The proposed action would have a minor adverse impact as a result of surface disturbance associated with OHV use and mineral exploration and development. Monitoring and patrol efforts and mitigation measures to be



T17S

T18S

T18S

T19S

R40E

R41E

R41E

R42E

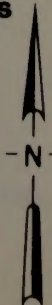
NONE	Recommended for Wilderness
	Recommended for Non Wilderness
	Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
	Split Estate
	State
	Private

Explanation

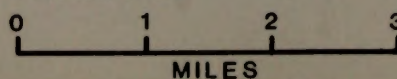
	High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
	Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
M	Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
H	High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

Ag	Silver
Cu	Copper
Pb	Lead
SG	Sand & Gravel
Zn	Zinc



Darwin Falls
Mineral Resource Potential



MAP-2
CDCA-132A

stipulated as part of any authorized resource development activities as outlined in the 1988 Darwin Falls ACEC Plan, will assure that sensitive species receive adequate protection. Extensive baseline data and monitoring studies would be undertaken as outlined in the plan, with annual review to provide a basis for establishing additional protective measures, if necessary.

3. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development:

Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available. Mining activities could continue to be restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines outlined in the CDCA and Darwin Falls ACEC management plans which limit vehicle access and mitigate adverse effects on sensitive resource values.

4. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated open routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the ACEC Plan.

5. Impact on Cultural Resources: Some loss of archaeological values could occur as a result of mineral exploration and development. This loss will be localized, primarily concentrated in the areas of high mineral potential comprising 15% of the WSA. Existing Federal laws and BLM policy along with restrictions outlined in existing management plans will lessen the magnitude of this loss by requiring extensive mitigation or avoidance of any impacts to these sites.

6. Impact on Native American Values: Native American access to traditional use areas will be retained.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments reflected the variety of activities in the area and concurred with the findings.
2. Study Phase: Eight of the fourteen comments received on this WSA favored wilderness for this area. Darwin Falls and China Garden Spring were the major points of concern. (China Garden Spring is currently withdrawn from mineral entry and is not included in the

WSA). Outstanding scenic quality of these particular areas and the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation were mentioned, along with the unique riparian area which is habitat for many plants and wildlife. One respondent stated that the area was totally uninhabited by man due to the steepness of the canyon walls; another spoke of vandalism there which needed to be controlled. While some respondents asked for rehabilitation of the mining areas, others requested boundary changes to exclude the impacted areas.

Scenic canyons in the northern part of the WSA were also mentioned by wilderness supporters, who said that geologic structures needed protection for their scientific and educational value.

The comments opposing wilderness designation dealt mainly with the area's mineral potential for lead, zinc, silver, gold, and tungsten and also cited the area's value for recreational uses primarily involving rockhounding and hunting.

One letter was received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). It favored wilderness designation.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. This WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons and letters supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for this area because of its mineral potential.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

North Argus Range

CDCA 132B

NORTH ARGUS RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-132B)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

28,375 acres

The North Argus Range WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the north-central portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest towns are Darwin, California, three miles west; Trona, California, 36 miles to the south; and Ridgecrest, California, 48 miles southwest. The WSA includes 27,348 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 769 acres of State lands and private inholdings totaling approximately 258 acres. No split-estate lands exist within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The North Argus Range WSA consists of two distinct, noncontiguous areas: one surrounding the Argus range to the north, the other encompassing a smaller area in the central portion of the range. For the purpose of clarity, throughout the remainder of this report, the northern portion will be referred to as Segment A and the southern portion will be referred to as Segment B.

Beginning one-fourth of a mile south of Panamint Springs, the north boundary of Segment A follows the Darwin Canyon-bottom west for four miles then cuts south for two miles excluding the western portion of Zinc Hill and the extensive mining activity in this area. Approximately one-fourth of a mile south of Zinc Hill, the boundary heads west for one-half of a mile and picks up the maintained dirt road through Darwin Canyon. The boundary follows this road south for six miles excluding the pumping station, tanks and roads located in T. 19 S., R. 41 E., Section 16, until it intersects with the China Lake Naval Weapons Center boundary. At this point, the southern boundary heads east for three miles following the China Lake Naval Weapon Center boundary until it intersects with the Stone Canyon Road. At the intersection, the boundary follows Stone Canyon Road northeast for four miles until it intersects with a graded road called the Nadeau Trail. Here the boundary follows the trail north for one and one-half miles then turns west to exclude the road and mining activity in and adjacent to Osborne Canyon and also at the Surprise Mine. Returning to Nadeau Trail, the boundary heads north for one and one-half miles then trends northwest for four miles skirting the foothills of the eastern portion of the Argus Range.

The western boundary of Segment B follows the China Lake Naval Weapons Center boundary for four miles. The southern boundary continues to follow China Lake Naval Weapons Center boundary east for two miles. The southeastern boundary follows no discernible topographical features as it winds its way over the mountains through Revenue Canyon. The eastern boundary skirts the foothills of the Argus range and then the northern boundary turns west following the ridgetops north of Wood Canyon for four miles until it intersects with the China Lake Naval Weapons Center boundary.

The Argus Range, which dominates both Segment A and Segment B, forms a long, narrow, mountain chain along the west side of Panamint Valley. The Argus Range is composed of steep slopes with highly dissected canyons. The west side of Segment A has very steep mountain slopes and smaller canyons which lead into Darwin Wash. Approximately 640 acres in Darwin Canyon are included in the larger 3,100-acre Darwin Falls ACEC which extends north and west of the study area's western boundary. Segment B consists of the same geologic composition. Two unnamed springs occur near Wood and Revenue Canyon. Elevations throughout the study area range from 2,800 feet on the east side to 7,517 feet in elevation on the west side of the Argus range.

Scant desert vegetation consisting of low desert shrubs of the creosote scrub plant community is found on the lower slopes. Steeper slopes along the range are relatively void of vegetation. An occasional pinyon-juniper vegetative assemblage occurs on the higher slopes. One permanent water source exists within the study area in Segment B. Its water is piped to the Kerr-McGee rock quarry operation which lies adjacent to the southern portion of Segment B. No BLM sensitive or Federal or State listed rare, threatened or endangered plant species are known to occur in this WSA. No Federal or State listed rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife species are known to occur.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2.	<u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> ---	0	acres recommended for wilderness
		27,348	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally-preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The nonsuitable recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the landforms and ecosystem of this WSA are represented in other areas identified for wilderness preservation; and (2) the area's value as wilderness is overshadowed by its potential for motorized recreation and mining.

The landforms and ecosystem exhibited by the study area are well represented in other areas currently designated and in others identified for wilderness preservation. Within 50 air miles are nine BLM WSA's recommended for wilderness designation. Additionally, there are three

designated areas administered by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in Sequoia National Forest. All are mountainous, and all contain examples of the same type of ecosystem found in the Argus Range WSA.

The addition of the Argus Range WSA to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) would not add to the diversity or uniqueness of the system, nor would it add significantly to the wilderness recreational opportunities available in the region. These factors, combined with the fact that this WSA has only marginal wilderness values, led to the nonwilderness recommendation.

The naturalness and opportunities for solitude within this WSA only minimally meet the criteria defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. Because the study area is surrounded by extensive active mining developments and adjacent to the China Lake Naval Weapons Center, it is difficult to escape the sights and sounds of civilization. These outside sights and sounds, involving noise and dust from mining activities and daily multiple overflights of military aircraft, detract from the sense of solitude and remoteness to be experienced within the area.

The WSA has a moderate to high potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, lead, zinc, tungsten and copper. An area near Osborne Canyon in Segment A shows a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium. Additionally, an area in the southwestern portion of Segment B adjacent to the Kerr-McGee limestone quarry, has a moderate potential for the occurrence of limestone.

Wilderness designation would conflict with full development of these potential resources since the area would be withdrawn from mineral entry and leasing. Conversely, since valid, existing mining claims could be developed, this activity would conflict with maintenance of wilderness values. There are approximately two miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

Segment A is within a portion of the Lacy/Cactus/McCloud Grazing Allotment. An allotment management plan (AMP) completed for the grazing lease outlines the grazing system to be followed and actions to be taken to improve range conditions and minimize conflicts with other resources.

Protection of wilderness and other resource values is being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the Darwin Falls Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Management Plan. These actions include potential closure of additional routes of travel and enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas. The resource values in the WSA would be best managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's limited use guidelines coupled with restrictions outlined in existing management plans serve to lessen potential impacts to resources within the WSA.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	27,348
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		769
Private		258
Total		<u>28,375</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	27,348
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>27,348</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area's naturalness has been eroded by over a century of mining activity. Only the extreme interior areas retain their primitive character. The works of man are significant on the western side of the WSA near Zinc Hill and although there is not current mining activity within the Zinc Hill area, past activities involving production of lead, silver, zinc, and gold have left scars which mar the naturalness within the study area. Although Osborne Canyon has been cherrystemmed from the WSA, there are mining adits

and routes outside of the cherrystemmed area which are included in the WSA. The area north of Stone Canyon also includes a number of mining portals and adits which further detract from the overall naturalness of the study area.

Segment B also contains evidence of past mining activity. Naturalness within the southern portion of the WSA has been impacted as a result of mining activity associated with the Kerr-McGee quarry located just outside of the WSA in the southeast corner. A water pipeline and water plant with valid rights-of-way are located here. This system is used as a water supply for the Kerr-McGee rock quarry. The remaining portion of Segment B retains its naturalness.

2. Solitude: Although these opportunities are available within the rugged interior, they become marginal as one moves closer to the WSA boundary. The lack of vegetative screening reduces opportunities for solitude in all but the pinyon/juniper areas. Opportunities for solitude are negatively impacted by the noise from nearby mining activities.

This WSA is periodically overflown by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities for unrestricted movement are obtainable throughout both portions of the WSA. Although this area receives minimal primitive types of recreational use, the deep interior canyons provide opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.
4. Special Features: Approximately 640 acres of the larger 3,100-acre Darwin Falls ACEC occur in the northern portion of Segment A. The area was designated as such for the protection of wildlife and vegetative resources.

The WSA contains roughly 17 square miles of permanent bighorn sheep habitat. The bighorn sheep is a BLM sensitive species. At one time, populations were estimated at 12 individuals and thought to be declining. Reintroduction of 18 individuals into the North Argus Range occurred in 1988. Monitoring efforts will determine any increase or decrease in population densities.

Two areas of high cultural resource sensitivity occur within the WSA. Prehistoric sites associated with stone tools, flakes, rock shelters, and rock circles represent several thousand years of occupation.

The region has been traditionally employed for summer and spring collection by both Owens Valley Shoshone-Paiute and Furnace Creek area Shoshone Native Americans. The area running north from Lookout Mountain to Maturango Peak, which includes all of Segment B, is a pinyon collection area of both Paiute and Shoshone Native American groups.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 27,348 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush (Larrea) ecosystem, which is widespread throughout the CDCA and is currently represented within the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

<u>Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,240,561
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2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

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<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
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Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
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<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of nine BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is South Sierra, administered by the Sequoia National Forest, located 30 miles west of the study area.

C. Manageability

The North Argus Range WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, manageability would be complicated by several issues. With few exceptions, the boundaries of either unit are not well defined on the ground. For the most part, the boundaries were established along section lines, contour lines and occasional topography. Extensive signing would be needed to adequately manage the boundaries.

Because many of the area's 61 mining claims are within zones predicted to have moderate potential for gold, silver, lead, tungsten, and uranium, it is likely that at least a portion of the claims would withstand a validity examination and be developed. Maintenance of wilderness values cannot be assured.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The North Argus Range WSA is located in the BLM Darwin/Slate Range Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M narrative in the wilderness section of

the CDCA plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III ,1980) stated that the WSA has potential for lead, silver, zinc, copper, gold, uranium, thorium, tungsten and limestone. As of December 12, 1979, approximately 35 patented and 50 unpatented mining claims, located within the WSA, were recorded with the BLM.

The 1980 BLM GRA report fully supports the G-E-M narrative statement in the EIS. The 1980 BLM GRA report classified the northern section of the WSA as having a high potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, lead, zinc, tungsten and copper. An area in the vicinity of Osborne Canyon, in the center of the northern section of the WSA, was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium (see Map 2). The 1980 BLM GRA report noted that an unknown amount of production may have occurred from uranium prospects in this vicinity.

Portions of the northern section of the WSA are included in two mining districts, the Modoc (formerly Darwin lead-silver) Gold District and the Zinc Hill (lead-silver-zinc) District. Major mines in the Modoc Mining District are the Surprise, Modoc, Minnietta, Defense, Hughes, Eclipse, Little Mack, Paul Imlay, Little Jim, Olancho Lead Number One, and Surveyor Lead mines. Production from the Modoc District has amounted to about 20,200,000 pounds of lead, 217,000 pounds of zinc, 189,000 pounds of copper, 2,040,000 ounces of silver, and 2,080 ounces of gold (1980 BLM GRA).

Major mines of the Zinc Hill district include the Empress, Zinc Hill, Darwin Zinc, Wynot, and Grand View mines. Production from the Zinc Hill area has amounted to 3,500,000 pounds of zinc, 270,00 pounds of lead, 14,300 pounds of copper, and 8,500 ounces of silver. The Zinc Hill Mine contained mineable ore when activity ceased. Production totals for the Modoc and Zinc Hill areas were: lead, 20,500,000 pounds; zinc, 3,720,000 pounds; copper, 204,000 pounds; silver, 2,050,000 ounces; gold, 2,080 ounces (1980 BLM GRA).

The 1980 BLM GRA report classified the southern section of the WSA as having a moderate occurrence potential for gold, silver, lead, zinc, copper, iron, and antimony. The southeastern portion of the southern section was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of limestone. This area is adjacent to the Kerr-McGee Westend limestone quarry which has produced 3,024,000 tons of high grade limestone since 1956 (1980 BLM GRA report).

South of the Modoc District and adjacent to the northern boundary of southern section of the WSA, are a few active gold claims (1979), and the Copper King Mine, which produced high grade copper, lead, zinc, and silver ores (1980 BLM GRA file).

Data from the 1980 BLM GRA file was incomplete and no assessment was made for leasable resources (oil, gas, sodium, potassium, geothermal).

However, data from the 1980 BLM GRA file documents show that the east edge of the south part of the WSA had been classified as a Prospective Geothermal Resource Area (PGRA) by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS Conservation Div., 1979).

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U. S. Geological Survey or U. S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys were conducted in the WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. A map by Majmundar (1983, Technical map of the geothermal resources of California, California Division of Mines and Geology, scale 1:750,000) has shown the WSA to be in an area with potential for the occurrence of geothermal energy resources. The WSA is not classified by the BLM as prospectively valuable for geothermal resources (1982). Based on the BLM classification system, the entire WSA can be classified as having a low potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources.

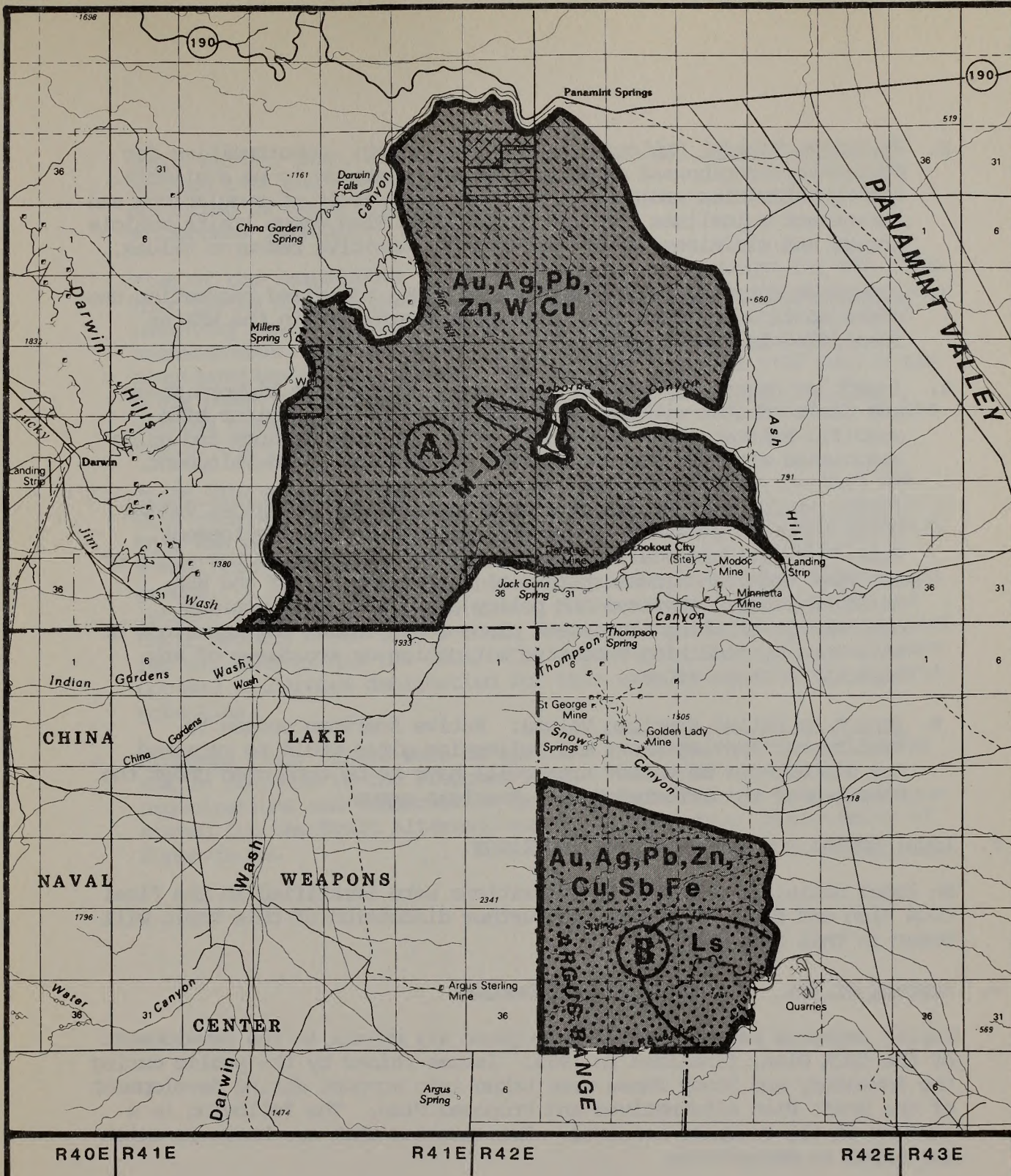
Most of the unpatented mining claims recorded with BLM are located in the northern half of the WSA. Mining Claims in the WSA are summarized in Table 4 from BLM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	57	57	N/A	1,140	1,140
Placer	N/A	3	3	N/A	120	120
Mill Site	N/A	1	1	N/A	5	5
Total	N/A	61	61	N/A	1,265	1,265

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Under low intensity, management there will be no immediate impact. Over the long-term, existing naturalness and solitude would gradually decline with projected gradually increasing off-highway vehicle (OHV) use of the area. Noise and surface disturbances associated with mineral exploration and development could result in a gradual decline in these values. This adverse impact is considered significant in localized areas since exploration and development would likely be limited to areas of moderate and high potential.



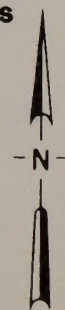
NONE	Recommended for Wilderness
	Recommended for Non Wilderness
	Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
	Split Estate
	State
	Private

Explanation

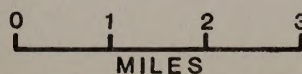
	High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
	Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
M	Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
H	High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

Ag	Silver
Au	Gold
Cu	Copper
Fe	Iron
Ls	Limestone
Pb	Lead
Sb	Antimony
U	Uranium
Zn	Zinc



**North Argus Range
Mineral Resource Potential**



**MAP-2
CDCA-132B**

2. Impact on Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available. Mining activities would be restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines outlined in the CDCA Plan which limits vehicle access and minimizes adverse effects on sensitive resource values.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the CDCA Plan.
4. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep Habitat: Impacts to bighorn sheep and their habitat will be negligible, consisting of minor site specific habitat loss as a result of surface disturbance and noise associated with OHV use and mineral exploration and development.
5. Impact on Cultural Resources: Some loss of archaeological values could occur as a result of mineral exploration and development. This loss will be localized, primarily concentrated in the areas of moderate and high mineral potential comprising 30% of the WSA. Existing Federal laws and BLM policy along with restrictions outlined in existing management plans would lessen the magnitude of this loss by requiring extensive mitigation or avoidance of any impacts to these sites.
6. Impact to Native American Values: Native American access to traditional hunting areas and collection sites would be retained. Any disturbance of sacred areas will have to be conducted under the auspices of the affected Native American group.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Several comments noted the presence of mining areas and roads. Portions were excluded from wilderness consideration following further field examinations.
2. Study Phase: Of the twenty comments received on this WSA, fifteen opposed wilderness designation for this area. The major reason was the area's high mineral potential. Minerals said to be present included uranium, zinc, tungsten, silver, antimony, iron, copper,

gold, silver, lime, and many rare earth metals. Many roads which service past and present mining operations were listed; some were described as being highly visible and, therefore, detrimental to wilderness quality.

Five of the respondents favored wilderness designation for WSA 132B. They listed several parts of the WSA which had been deleted in the inventory phase, mostly because of mining activity, and requested reinstatement of these areas. One organization recommended consideration of the combined area of WSAs 132A and 132B during the study phase to determine whether rehabilitation of some of the deleted areas would be possible. No responses were received to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79).

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rock hounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons and letters supporting this position. Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors opposed wilderness designation for this area because of its mineral potential.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Wildrose Canyon

CDCA 134

WILDROSE CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-134)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

44,258 acres

The Wildrose Canyon WSA is in south-central Inyo County, in the north-central portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest city is Ridgecrest, approximately 60 miles southwest. The study area consists of 41,787 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and 2,471 acres of State land; there are no private inholdings (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern boundary of the WSA is State Highway 190, from the Panamint Valley to Towne Pass at the edge of Death Valley National Monument (DVNM). From Towne Pass the eastern WSA boundary follows the national monument boundary until it meets Wildrose Road, which forms the WSA's south border. The western boundary is the Panamint Valley Road. The portion of adjoining the WSA is administratively endorsed wilderness. Immediately north of State Highway 190 is BLM's Panamint Dunes WSA, which is recommended for wilderness designation.

From west to east, the Wildrose Canyon WSA takes in part of the Panamint Valley, including the southern portion of Panamint Dry Lake, then passes through a gradually sloping alluvial fan to meet the abrupt edge of the Panamint Range, taking in the ridges up to the boundary. The crest of the range is located within the Monument. The WSA's portion of the Panamint Range is cut by deep canyons running east and west, through which flow intermittent streams. The southeastern portion of the WSA includes an area of badlands. Elevations range from 1,542 feet on the dry lake bed to 6,244 feet on the highest ridge at the eastern border of the WSA. The vegetation varies with elevation; the higher ridges and steep slopes have little or no vegetation, while the canyon bottoms and alluvial fans are dominated by sparse creosote bush and desert holly.

The Panamint Dry Lake South Off-Highway Vehicle Area is located within the nonsuitable portion of the WSA, south of Highway 190 on the surface of Panamint Dry Lake.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

14,079	acres recommended for wilderness
27,708	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

Thirty-four percent suitable partial wilderness is the recommendation for the Wildrose Canyon WSA. The 27,708 acres in this WSA recommended nonsuitable are released for uses other than wilderness. The recommended wilderness area is entirely public land administered by the BLM, with no inholdings. This recommendation will be implemented using all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The partial-wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the area recommended for wilderness has high-quality wilderness values, and is adjacent to administratively-endorsed wilderness in DVM; (2) the wilderness values of the recommended nonwilderness area are low, and (3) portions of the nonsuitable area have moderate potential for sand, gravel and clay.

The majority of the recommended wilderness area is in a pristine state. This area's scenic quality is enhanced by its diverse and sometimes dramatic topography, and attracts considerable primitive recreation use. Due to the lack of roads or other evidence of human activity, and large size when considered in conjunction with the neighboring portion of the national monument, this area offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive forms of recreation. There are no known routes of travel within the suitably recommended portion of the WSA.

There are approximately 32 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. In addition to a portion of the nonsuitable area being designated as an off-highway vehicle area, this area also contains 16 miles of improved routes and 14 miles of primitive ways. These human alterations to the natural environment decrease a visitor's sense of solitude and remoteness, and hence, the quality of the primitive recreation experience available here.

When the preliminary wilderness recommendations were made in the CDCA Plan, an estimated moderate potential for oil and gas, sodium, potassium, and geothermal resources was part of the rationale for recommending 53% of this WSA for nonwilderness. More recent studies do not support this earlier assessment of mineral potential, as indicated in the section of this report entitled "Energy and Mineral Resource Values." However, the nonwilderness recommendation is warranted because of the lack of wilderness characteristics in a sizeable portion of the area, the absence of special features or primitive recreation attractions, and because portions of the area have a demonstrated moderate potential for sand, gravel and clay.

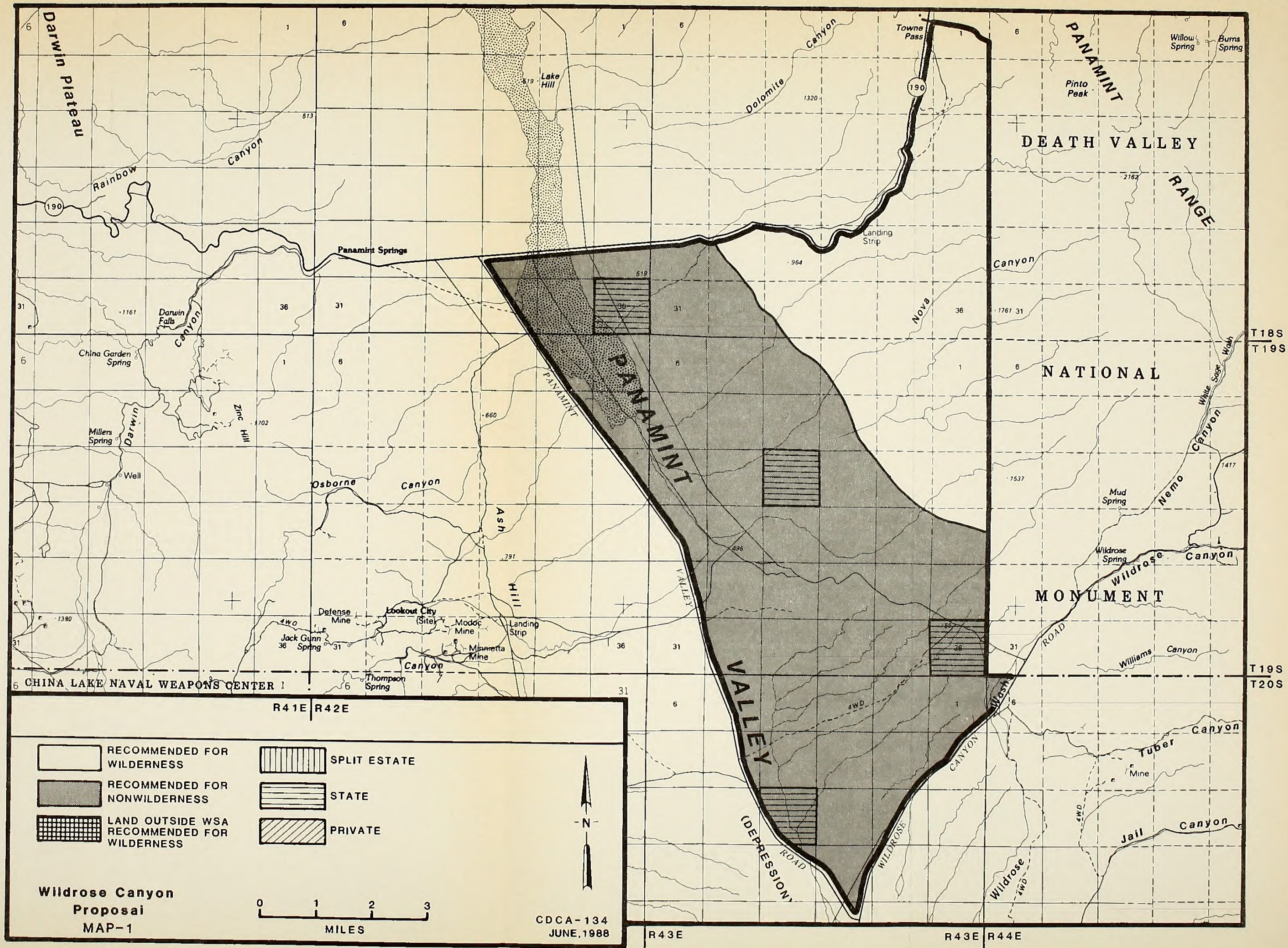


TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	41,787
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		2,471
Private		0
Total		<u>44,258</u>
 <u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		 <u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	14,079
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>14,079</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
 <u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		 <u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	27,708
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>27,708</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Within the area recommended for wilderness, human alterations to the natural environment are minimal, and concentrated in the northeast portion close to State Route 190. A former California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) sand and gravel materials source is located here, with approximately three miles of primitive way extending south into the material source site from State Highway 190 at Towne Pass, and then continuing back to the highway. A landing strip is located inside the WSA, adjacent to the highway approximately four miles south of Towne Pass. Most of the remainder of the area recommended for wilderness is in a pristine condition, with little or no imprints of man.

The area recommended for nonwilderness contains substantial human alterations to the natural environment. The entire surface of Panamint Dry Lake within the WSA is a designated off-highway vehicle (OHV) open area where cross-country vehicle travel is authorized, and the lake bed is criss-crossed with OHV tracks. The lake bed is subject to periodic flooding, which obliterates some, but not all, of these imprints. In addition, the recommended nonwilderness contains 30 miles of primitive ways, including about 14 miles of primitive way which runs from southeast to northwest through this entire segment of the WSA, providing access to the Big Four Mine from the Wildrose Road. Two miles of the Minnietta Road, a primitive way to the Minnietta Mine from the primitive way accessing the Big Four Mine, are also within the WSA. A ten-mile long primitive way runs through the middle of Panamint Dry Lake and then follows a wash, paralleling and finally joining the way that services the Big Four Mine. An additional four miles of primitive way leaves the Big Four Mine Road to follow a wash in the southern portion of the area.

2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude abound in the recommended wilderness area, enhanced by the area's apparent remoteness and the screening effect of the rugged topography.

Opportunities for solitude are reduced on the portion of the WSA recommended for nonwilderness, because of the extensive system of primitive ways mentioned above, combined with this area's flat to sloping, relatively open topography.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Within the recommended wilderness portion of the WSA, the diverse terrain and presence of numerous streams and springs are features which attract wilderness users. Primitive recreation opportunities are enhanced by the presence of the adjacent wildlands of DVNM.

The recommended nonwilderness portion of the WSA contains no features that are particularly attractive to primitive recreationists. The presence of many miles of vehicle routes and primitive ways reduces the quality of the primitive experience available here.

4. Special Features: Two rare plant species, Eriogonum intrafractum (jointed buckwheat) and E. hoffmannii ssp. hoffmannii (Hoffmans buckwheat), are found in this WSA.

No threatened or endangered wildlife are known in this WSA. The higher elevations within the WSA serve as transient range for desert bighorn sheep, and prairie falcons forage over the lowlands in the western two-thirds of the study area. Both are BLM sensitive species.

The Wildrose Canyon WSA has not been fully inventoried for cultural resources. A low density of historic sites, but a very high density of prehistoric sites, including rock alignments, intaglios, and rock cairns are known to exist in areas that have been surveyed.

From historic times into the present, the majority of the study area has been used by the Panamint Shoshone and the Owens Valley Shoshone in late spring and summer for the collection of chia and blazing star.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 22,658 acres of the American Desert/Ponderosa Forest and 19,129 acres of the American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon ecosystems. The Wildrose Canyon WSA exhibits the same ecosystem as many other areas in the general region. Wilderness designation of this WSA would add diversity of ecosystems since the American Desert/Ponderosa Forest ecosystem is not currently represented in the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

<u>Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Western Ponderosa Forest	0	0	3	49,095
American Desert/Juniper- Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	24	685,852
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Western Ponderosa Forest	0	0	3	49,095
American Desert/Juniper- Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	16	466,101

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of wilderness areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of these population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:
Adjacent to Wildrose Canyon WSA is the administratively endorsed wilderness in Death Valley National Monument. Also recommended for wilderness is the Panamint Dunes WSA, directly across State Highway 190 from this WSA. In addition, ten other BLM study areas recommended for wilderness are within 50 air miles, nine in the California Desert District and one in Bakersfield District. The closest congressionally-designated area is the Golden Trout Wilderness administered by the U.S. Forest Service, approximately 40 air miles west.

C. Manageability

The Wildrose Canyon WSA is manageable as wilderness. The boundaries of the area are readily identifiable or coincide the administratively-endorsed wilderness of DVNM, an area with compatible management objectives.

However, there are differences in the ease of manageability between the recommended wilderness and nonwilderness portions of the study area. Within the recommended wilderness, there are no major issues that would complicate effective management. No existing uses would be displaced by wilderness designation. In contrast, the area recommended for nonwilderness contains the Panamint Dry Lake OHV Area, which would be closed if the area became wilderness. In addition, 30 miles of primitive ways would be closed to motorized recreation. Past experience has shown that closing an area which was previously open to OHV use is a difficult task and would take a significant management effort.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: Prior to publication of the CDCA Plan, BLM prepared a Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Report for the Panamint Mountain G-E-M Resource Area (GRA), of which the WSA is a part. (The Panamint Mountain GRA Report is a BLM administrative report available in the California Desert District G-E-M resource files).

The 1980 GRA report classified the extreme northeast portion of the WSA southeast of Towne Pass on the DVNM boundary as having a low occurrence potential for lead, silver, zinc and dolomite deposits. The entire WSA was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA file data as having a low to unknown potential for uranium. This potential rating was assigned primarily on the basis of favorable rock types and random uranium anomalies as documented by the National Uranium Resource Evaluation (NURE) data.

Sand, gravel and clay resources were classified in the GRA report as having a high occurrence potential in the extreme northern tip of the WSA, a moderate occurrence potential in the northwestern and southern tip of the WSA, and a low occurrence potential in the alluvial fan deposits outcropping in the north-central portion of the WSA. High occurrence potential was assigned to an area of active extraction by the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) for the maintenance of State Route 190. These areas of moderate and high potential for the occurrence of sand, gravel, and clay are shown on Map 2. The GRA report cited the remoteness of the WSA and the high transportation costs to market as factors precluding the development of the salable and locatable nonmetallic (dolomite and limestone) resources of the WSA in the near future.

The northwestern portion of the WSA was classified as having a low potential for the occurrence of borates based on a favorable geologic environment. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS Conservation Div, 1979) classified the WSA, with the exception of the northeastern tip, as prospectively valuable for oil, gas, sodium and potassium. As a result of this classification, the 1980 BLM GRA report assigned a moderate occurrence potential for these minerals in 90% of the WSA. In addition, the southern tip of the WSA was classified by the USGS (1979) as a Potential Geothermal Resource Area (PGRA) and assigned a moderate potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources by the 1980 BLM GRA report.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: The U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) and the USGS have conducted mineral surveys in the recommended wilderness portion of the WSA. In 1983, the BOM published the results of their survey as MLA 37-83 and in 1984, the USGS issued Open File Report (OFR) 84-665 for the suitable portion of the WSA.

The BOM report was based on an analysis of 22 samples (14 rock and eight alluvium), a literature and records search, and a field inspection. The BOM found that no potential existed for any significant mineral deposits except sand and gravel which had been mined by CalTrans. USGS report found that the WSA lies in a geologic province that is characterized by the presence of lead, zinc, and silver hydrothermal-type deposits and skarns with tungsten, molybdenum, and copper. The USGS classified an area in the northeastern portion of the WSA as having a low potential for the occurrence of lead-silver-zinc, tungsten, molybdenum, and copper deposits. This supports the 1980 BLM GRA classification for this area. The report indicates that anomalous values for molybdenum, barium, antimony, and bismuth were found in study samples collected in stream drainages. However, the report stated that weak anomalies at widely separated localities and low elemental concentration levels suggest that small deposits of either type may occur, but no specific evidence for significant deposits was found in the study area. The report also notes the existence of the carbonate rocks in

the northeastern portion of the WSA which were identified in the 1980 BLM GRA file, but does not assign an occurrence potential classification.

The USGS report stated that no uranium, thorium, fossil fuels or geothermal resources were found in the WSA during the study. Therefore, USGS did not assign an occurrence potential classification to these resources. The USGS report stated that potential sand and gravel deposits existed in the WSA, but did not identify the location of these deposits.

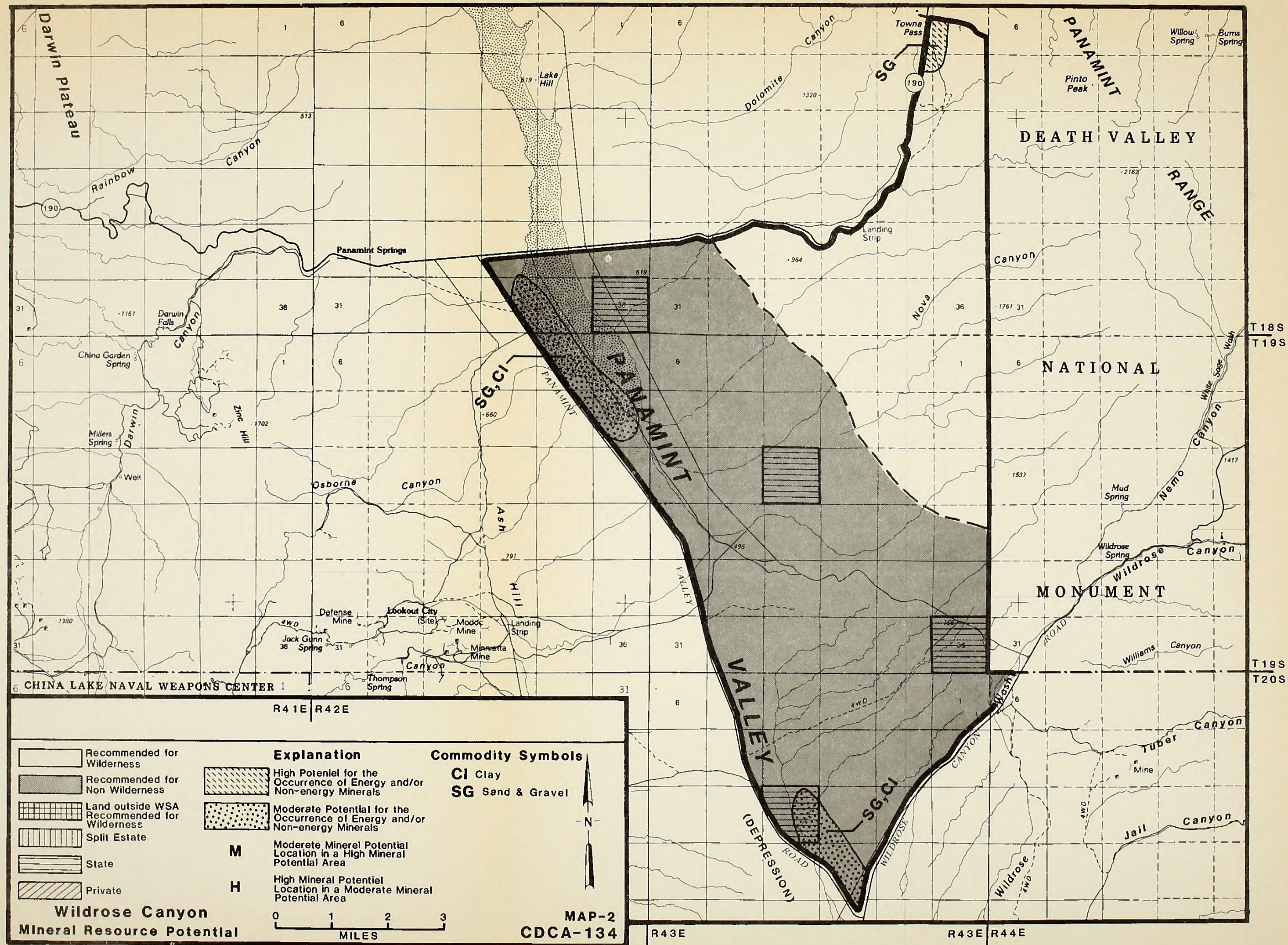
As of December 1987, BLM records show that there are two unpatented lode mining claims encumbering 40 acres in the southwestern portion of the recommended nonwilderness area of the WSA (Table 4).

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	2	2	N/A	40	40
Placer	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	2	2	N/A	40	40

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Existing high quality wilderness values would be retained on the 43% of the WSA to be designated wilderness. The already low wilderness values on the 57% of the WSA to be returned to low intensity management would gradually decline over the long-term, adjacent to routes used for OHV recreation, and at sand and gravel extraction sites.
2. Impact of Native American Uses and Values: Access to traditional Native American collection areas would be retained in the nonsuitable portion of the WSA. Access to sites within the 43% recommended wilderness would be restricted to non-mechanized means.
3. Impact on Archaeological Resources: Archaeological resources would be protected from surface disturbance in the suitable area. Within the portion to remain nonwilderness, all proposed surface-disturbing activities would be subject to environmental analysis to allow the detection and salvage of any resources. Some sites may be unintentionally damaged by casual OHV recreational activity.
4. Impact on Motorized Recreation: This activity could be negligibly affected by the proposed action. The Panamint Dry Lake OHV Area, as well as almost all vehicle routes within the WSA, are in the nonwilderness portion and could thus continue to be available for motorized travel. The recommended wilderness contains only three miles of vehicle routes, leading from Highway 190 to a sand and gravel materials site.



5. Impact on Sensitive Plant and Wildlife Habitat: All proposed surface disturbing activities in the recommended nonwilderness area would be subject to environmental analysis. This process would allow the identification of potential impacts, and the development and implementation of appropriate mitigating measures. The bighorn sheep transient range within this WSA will be preserved in its natural state because the range is confined to the mountain ridges, which are all within the recommended wilderness area.
6. Impact on Sand and Gravel Extraction: Sand and gravel extraction will not be permitted within the suitable portion of the WSA, adversely affecting the ability of these sites to provide materials for highway maintenance.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Known inaccuracies are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Most comments agreed with the findings on wilderness quality and natural condition.
2. Study Phase: Sixteen of the 22 comments received about this WSA favored wilderness designation. The following factors contributed to the suitability of this area for wilderness, according to the respondents: (1) contiguity to proposed wilderness in DVNM, (2) outstanding scenic quality, (3) opportunities for education and research in ecology, geology, and history, and (4) suitability for primitive recreation such as hiking, horseback riding, and primitive camping on the valley floor. Wilderness status would ensure protection of wildlife and vegetation, especially the barrel cactus and the endangered Panamint daisy. (The WSA is not known to contain Panamint daisy, Enceliopsis covillei, and is outside the range of elevations, 1,200 to 1,400 feet, where this plant has been observed.)

The comments opposing wilderness designation discussed scenic quality and concurrent activities. One felt the area was ugly and flat, offering no chance for solitude. Another discussed sights and sounds near the area that would detract from wilderness quality; these included military overflights. A request was made for vehicular access for activities such as rockhounding and

photography, and it was suggested that Tuber Canyon should be left open to vehicles. (Tuber Canyon is outside the Wildrose Canyon WSA. It is in the Surprise Canyon WSA, CDCA-136). Boundary extension to the paved Panamint Valley road was proposed.

Responses through the Public Input Workbook for the Wilderness Study Phase (3/15/79) generally supported wilderness because of high scenic and botanical values of the Panamint Range. One letter proposed moving the northern boundary away from State Route 190.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: A variety of public comments not specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. For example, one indicated complete agreement with the Protection Alternative, another expressed the need for more acreage to be recommended as suitable for wilderness than in the Protection Alternative, while a third insisted that more nonmountainous areas be recommended as suitable for wilderness than in the Balanced Alternative. In addition, protection was requested for the Panamint Valley burros.

The National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups, recommended that this area be designated non-suitable for wilderness. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons and letters supporting this position. Conservation groups supported wilderness designation for the entire WSA. Comments were largely concerned with motorized vehicles -- either the need for access for recreation or mineral exploration and development or the need to protect the sensitive natural values of the area from vehicular damage. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors requested a moderate intensity, multiple use designation for this area because of mineral resources.

4. Proposed Plan: There were practically no specific comments on this particular WSA in response to the Proposed Plan. Motorized vehicle groups and conservation organizations maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

Surprise Canyon

CDCA 136

SURPRISE CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-136)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

58,480 acres

The Surprise Canyon WSA is located in Inyo County in the west-central portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest community is Trona, located approximately 25 miles to the southwest. The WSA includes 58,398 acres of public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), no State land and private inholdings totalling 82 acres (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern and eastern boundaries of this WSA follow the Death Valley National Monument (DVNM) boundary line. The southern boundary traverses Pleasant Canyon, avoiding mining activities and roads. To the west, the boundary is extremely complex; several roads and areas disturbed by mining activities have been cherrystemmed out of the WSA. From Pleasant Canyon, the western boundary follows topographic features to Jackpot Canyon where a cherrystemmed road has been excluded. From Jackpot Canyon, the boundary continues north to Happy Canyon. Here, the boundary cherrystems around a large area disturbed by mining activity. The boundary follows the north side of Happy Canyon to Indian Ranch Road, then proceeds along this road to where it intersects with Highway 178. Along Indian Ranch Road, two long roads ending at areas of surface disturbance—one located in Surprise Canyon and the second, in Jail Canyon—have been cherrystemmed out of the WSA. The western boundary follows Highway 178, excluding a cherrystemmed dirt road, to the DVNM boundary.

The WSA area is composed of small, alluvial slopes in the lower western elevations which rise eastward to steep, jagged ridges and sharp peaks of the Panamint Mountains. Deep dissected canyons cut into the Panamint Mountains and form the interior of the WSA. Elevations range from 1,080 feet in the west side to 9,200 feet on the eastern side of the WSA. Vegetation varies, depending on slope, aspect, and elevation. The alluvial fans have widely spaced creosote bush scrub and desert holly as the dominant plant forms. The rock areas at 1,200 to 1,400 feet elevation support the Panamint daisy, a BLM sensitive species. The canyons have extensive growths of riparian plants such as cottonwood and willows. At increased elevations dominant plants are the Great Basin sagebrush and pinyon pine-juniper trees. Limber pine is encountered on the highest slopes, along with bristlecone pine.

The Surprise Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) overlaps the central portion of this WSA. This ACEC, established in 1980 by the CDCA Plan, was designated to protect sensitive wildlife, vegetation, and historical and cultural resources. This ACEC covers approximately 25% of the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS. Two different suitability recommendations were analyzed in the EIS's: all wilderness, and no wilderness.

2.	<u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> —	0	acres recommended for wilderness
		58,398	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

This area is recommended nonsuitable for the following reasons: (1) while the WSA did meet the criteria of wilderness as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, the area's wilderness values are only marginal and do not exceed the potential for other uses, including exploration and development of mineral values; (2) the area possesses areas of high mineral potential; and (3) the area would be extremely difficult to manage as wilderness. There are approximately 25 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

The natural condition of the WSA has been severely altered in localized areas by numerous mining scars. The most noticeable scars are around the perimeter of the WSA and within the canyons where access has been easiest. There are mining camps, mill sites, adits, portals, and numerous amounts of mining equipment and materials scattered throughout the WSA. Many miles of ways developed for mining operations and mineral exploration extend throughout much of the area. Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation are compromised by mining activity within the cherrystemmed areas of the WSA. Noise, dust, and the movement of men and machinery within the numerous cherrystemmed areas of the WSA will lessen outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

The major portions of this WSA possess high potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals, specifically silver and gold. Similarly, other large areas within this area have moderate potential for the occurrence of copper, chromium, tungsten, lead, zinc, barite, and dolomite, as well as gold and silver. The western portion of the WSA includes areas interpreted to have moderate potential for the occurrence of leasable mineral deposits,

specifically oil, gas, geothermal, sodium and potassium. The southern portion of the WSA also contains occurrences of uranium or thorium mineralization.

Management of the area as wilderness would be difficult, since mining activity within the WSA has, at times, been intense throughout the last century. There are currently six mining plans of operations within the WSA; there are also 212 currently registered mining claims located within the boundaries of the WSA. Many of the mining claims and operations within the WSA are "grandfathered," meaning they possess valid and existing rights to develop their mining claims. Under valid, existing rights, mining activities that are necessary and reasonably incidental to the mining operation can continue within a wilderness area, even if they impair wilderness quality. While these activities cannot cause unnecessary or undue degradation, they may be severe enough to greatly hamper manageability of the area to preserve wilderness values.

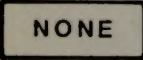


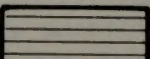

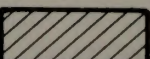


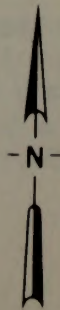
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|---|---|---|--------------|
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | PRIVATE |



**Surprise Canyon
Proposal
MAP-1**

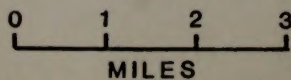


TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	58,398
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		82
Total		<u>58,480</u>

<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>

Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0

<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	58,398
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>58,398</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area shows definite signs of man's work, of which mining scars are the most noticeable. The scars include mining routes, mill sites, portals, adits and other associated surface disturbing activities. A bladed road, inadvertently overlooked during the wilderness study inventory, extends from the bottom of Hall Canyon to within DVM. This road and the cherrystemmed road up Jail Canyon cut a corridor across the WSA, effectively dividing the WSA in two parts. Within Surprise Canyon, approximately 2,250 acres of land have been cherrystemmed from the WSA due to mining activity

and surface disturbance within that area. Happy Canyon and some surrounding acreage has been cherrystemmed from the WSA due to loss of naturalness caused by mining activity.

2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude are obtainable in portions of the WSA. Mining activity within the WSA could effect the solitude of the area to a point that it may not be considered outstanding.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Outstanding opportunities for unrestricted movement are limited within the WSA because of the numerous cherrystems that compartmentalize the area. Mining activity within the WSA in the major canyons would also decrease the opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.
4. Special Features: The central portion of the WSA contains the Surprise Canyon ACEC which was designated to protect the sensitive wildlife, vegetation, and historical and cultural resources within the area.

The WSA contains habitat supporting the Panamint daisy (Enceliopsis covillei), a BLM sensitive plant species. The Panamint daisy, endemic to the Panamint Range, is found at elevations of 1,200 through 1,400 feet on steep, rocky slopes.

Canyon systems, mountain slopes, and a relative abundance of water from at least four springs in the area provide roughly 12 square miles of permanent range for desert bighorn sheep (Ovis canadensis nelsoni). The Panamint herd, numbering over 200 individuals, range throughout the Panamint Mountains. Bighorn sheep are considered a sensitive species by BLM.

Historic and prehistoric cultural resources have been identified within the WSA. Historic mining towns, mill sites, and other sites are located within or near the WSA. The townsite of Panamint City is located within the heart of Surprise Canyon, but has been cherrystemmed out of the WSA. This townsite has been suggested for consideration as a National Historic Landmark and to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Prehistoric sites include rock art, one village, and campsites.

Native American traditional values include concern for human burials and places of religious significance. The entire southern portion of the range has been employed by the Panamint-Shoshone for pinyon collecting.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System
(NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 28,614 acres of the American Desert/Western Ponderosa Forest and 29,784 acres of the American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland ecosystems. Although this WSA would add diversity in the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS the Bureau has recommended one WSA with a similar ecosystem (Wildrose Canyon WSA) as suitable for wilderness designation. The landforms within this WSA are typical of the entire Panamint Mountain range and other mountains in the area.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Western Ponderosa Forest	0	0	3	43,339
American Desert/Juniper- Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	24	677,286
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Western Ponderosa Forest	0	0	3	43,339
American Desert/Juniper- Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	16	456,035

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 12 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is South Sierra Wilderness Area, administered by Sequoia National Forest, roughly 50 miles away.

C. Manageability

The Surprise Canyon WSA is manageable as wilderness. Management would, however, be very difficult. Frequent signing, detailed maps, and intensive patrolling along the west and southern boundary roads plus the roads which have been cherrystemmed from the WSA would be required to ensure the integrity of the area's wilderness values.

Effective management of the WSA as wilderness would also be complicated by mineral exploration and development. Mining activity throughout the WSA has been intense for the last century. Virtually the entire WSA has identified mineral potential. Currently there are six mining plans of operation and 212 registered mining claims within the WSA. All major canyon systems within the WSA are being currently explored for minerals. Many of the claims within the WSA are pre-FLPMA or have valid existing rights which take precedence over wilderness values. Due to the mining activities within the WSA, it would be difficult to manage this area as wilderness. Mining exploration and development within the WSA causes management problems due to the noise, dust, and physical intrusions caused by roads, buildings, and facilities associated with mining operations. If a large scale mining operation occurred or expanded its current use within the WSA, it would further adversely effect the manageability of the WSA.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Surprise Canyon WSA is in the BLM Panamint Mountains Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M narrative in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980, stated that the WSA has potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, lead, copper, zinc, tungsten, uranium and molybdenum. As of December 12, 1979, 407 unpatented mining claims located within the WSA that were recorded with BLM. Within the cherrystemmed areas, outside of the WSA boundary, there were five patented and 21 unpatented mining claims.

The 1980 BLM GRA report fully supports the EIS statement of high potential for the occurrence of gold and silver in the eastern portion of the WSA as shown on Map 2. The GRA report cites production of 14,600 oz. of gold, 2,057,000 oz. of silver, and unknown quantities of lead, zinc and tungsten from mines located in this WSA. The report also states that the Sentinel Peak Mine, located southwest of Panamint City, has estimated reserves of 15,400,000 oz. silver, 14,000,000 pounds of copper, and 14,000,000 pounds of lead. This area was classified as having a high potential for the occurrence of these minerals by the 1980 BLM GRA report. Much of the southern and the east-central portions of this WSA were classified in the 1980 BLM GRA report as having moderate occurrence potential for tungsten, lead, zinc, and silver. Two isolated areas in the northern portion of the WSA--the Corona Mine, located in Jail Canyon, and the Bonanza Mine, located in Tuber Canyon--were classified as having a high potential for the occurrence of gold, based on an unknown amount of production. An area in the east-central portion of the WSA, surrounding Panamint City, was classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of barite. Also, an area in Hall Canyon, located in the northern portion of the WSA, was classified by the 1980 BLM GRA report as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of dolomite.

In addition, the BLM GRA report classified an area in the southern portion of the WSA as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of uranium. This classification was based on significant geochemical anomalies, active exploration drilling and known uranium occurrences as documented in the 1980 GRA file.

The extreme western portion of the WSA was classified by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS Conservation Division, 1979) as prospectively valuable for oil, gas, sodium and potassium. In addition, and area in the west-central portion of the WSA, near Warm

Sulphur Springs, was also classified as a Potential Geothermal Resource Area (PGRA) by the USGS (1979). As a result of these classifications, the 1980 BLM GRA report assigned a moderate potential for the occurrence of oil, gas, sodium, potassium and geothermal resources in the western portion of the WSA.

The 1980 BLM GRA file contained data documenting small copper prospects with unknown production and significant geochemical anomalies for copper in the northeastern portion of the WSA. In addition, the 1980 BLM GRA report also documented a significant geochemical anomaly for chromium in a favorable geological environment in the north-central portion of the WSA. These areas are classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of copper and chromium under the BLM classification system.

Since 1980, nine plans of operation for exploration and mining activities, specific to this WSA, have been received by the BLM Ridgecrest Resource Area. The plans have addressed activities for exploration, development and production of primarily precious metal deposits in areas classified as having a high occurrence potential by the 1980 BLM GRA report.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys have been conducted in the WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

Unpatented lode and placer claims, and millsite locations are concentrated in areas of high potential for precious metals as identified on Map 2. Mining Claims are summarized in Table 4 from BLM records dated January, 1988.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	195	195	N/A	3,900	3,900
Placer	N/A	3	3	N/A	120	120
Mill Sites	N/A	14	14	N/A	70	70
Total	N/A	212	212	N/A	4,090	4,090

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Mineral development will cause localized impacts to naturalness. These impacts will be concentrated in the mineralized portion of the WSA, covering roughly 80% of the total area; ten percent of the total area is currently covered by mining claims. Opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation will be adversely impacted along designated routes of travel by the continued use of off-highway vehicles.



NONE Recommended for Wilderness

Recommended for Non Wilderness

Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness

Split Estate

State

Private

Explanation

High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals

Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals

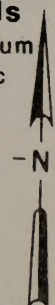
M Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area

H High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

0 1 2 3
MILES

Commodity Symbols

Ag Silver **U** Uranium
Au Gold **Zn** Zinc
Ba Barium
Cr Chromium
Cu Copper
Do Dolomite
G Geothermal
K Potassium
Na Sodium
OG Oil & Gas **W** Tungsten
Pb Lead
SG Sand & Gravel



Surprise Canyon
Mineral Resource Potential

MAP-2
CDCA-136

2. Impact on Mineral Exploration and Development: Exploration and development of mineral resources will be allowed to continue, subject to the regulations stated in 43 CFR 3809 regarding surface disturbance, as well as any additional constraints stated in the CDCA Plan.
3. Impact on Panamint Daisy/Habitat: Habitat for this species occurs on steep, rocky slopes between 1,200 and 4,000 feet elevation. Some habitat loss will occur due to mineral development. However, rough terrain coupled with protective guidelines as outlined in the CDCA Plan will help provide protection to this species.
4. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep/Habitat: Impacts to bighorn sheep habitat will consist of localized habitat loss caused by mineral development. Human activity related to mining will occasionally disrupt individual animals. Management guidelines as listed in the CDCA Plan will provide some measure of protection to this sensitive species.
5. Impact on Native American Pinyon Collection Activities: The proposed action will have no impact on this activity. Collection activities will be allowed to continue and access to the collection areas will remain open.
6. Impact on Cultural Resources: Some loss of archaeological values will occur as a result of mineral exploration and development. This loss will be localized, primarily concentrated in the areas of high and moderate mineral potential, comprising roughly 80% of the WSA. Existing Federal laws and BIM guidelines, as listed in the CDCA Plan, will lessen the rate of this loss by requiring extensive mitigation of any impacts.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Most comments described mining roads and activity. All were field-checked and appear on the map as appropriate. A substantial number of comments addressed the primitive recreation opportunities.

2. Study Phase: Thirty-two of the 50 letters received on WSA 136 opposed wilderness status. The major concern was mining and the area's high mineralization. Scars of past mining and the many existing roads into the canyons were said to make the area unsuitable for wilderness. Many writers feared that the area's mineral potential would not be developed under wilderness regulations. One miner said that opening the area to wilderness use would bring in vandals and result in further defacement of mining properties. Minerals which were mentioned as being important in the Panamints were silver, uranium, gold, copper, and tungsten.

Another factor which several respondents felt detracted from wilderness quality was the noise and sonic booms produced by jet aircraft from the Naval Weapons Center and Edwards Air Force Base. Many wilderness opponents wanted to continue using the area for four-wheel driving, camping, hunting, and rockhounding. One comment indicated that the Panamint daisy is adequately protected within DVNM and that further protection in this WSA was unnecessary. Another noted the economic dependence of the towns of Darwin and Ballarat on users of motorized vehicles for mining and recreation.

The proponents of wilderness designation for this area were enthusiastic about its outstanding scenic and ecological values. Also mentioned were the area's educational, historical, and geological values, the need to protect flora and fauna, especially streamside habitats, and the contiguity of the area to DVNM--one of those who commented said that the BLM should be protecting its side of the Panamint Range. The desert bighorn, Panamint alligator lizard, speckled rattlesnake, Panamint daisy and the brittlecone pine were species mentioned. Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation were also present.

Many of the proponents of wilderness recognized the importance of mining in the Panamint Range but felt that the active mining operations could be excluded from the WSA and that abandoned mines were historical resources which could be compatible with wilderness.

Eleven responses were received to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). Six recommended wilderness designation and preservation because of high scenic values and the endangered and rare Panamint daisy, Panamint alligator lizard, and the sub-species of speckled rattlesnake. Also stated was the fact that the area abuts a proposed wilderness area in DVNM and is an integral ecological part of the land within DVNM.

Five responses opposed wilderness because of high mineralization and many patented mining claims. It was felt that mineral potential should be developed and that past and future mining are not consistent with wilderness values.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: A variety of comments were received in response to the Draft Desert Plan. One indicated complete agreement with the Protection Alternative, another expressed a need for more wilderness than that recommended by the Protection Alternative, and still another favored the Use Alternative. Others called for recommending the entire study area and/or greater acreage of nonmountainous terrain as suitable for wilderness under the Balanced Alternative. One respondent stated that the area does not qualify as wilderness because of the many signs of man and mining development.

This WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons and letters supporting this position. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors also opposed wilderness because of mineral resources.

Conservation organizations and their members wrote many letters recommending wilderness designation for all WSAs within the CDCA. The Wilderness Society specifically mentioned this WSA as being suitable for wilderness, as did the California Department of Resources.

4. Proposed Plan: Comments on this WSA brought out the same points listed for earlier stages of the planning process. Motorized vehicle organizations and conservation groups maintained the same positions stated for the Draft Plan Alternatives, as did the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.

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Form 1279-3
(June 1984)

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